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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[LADY JANE'S HATRED WAS BURNING MORE FIERCELY THAN THE FLAME WHICH CONSUMED THE WORDS OF PEACE AND FORGIVENESS.]

## OH! GIVE HIM BACK TO ME!

### CHAPTER X.

WHO WILL SAVE HER?

"HELP! help! help!" cried Mrs. Milton, wringing her hands as she ran along the bank, tripped up by a broken bulrush, and nearly sent head foremost on her nose as she caught her foot in a root. "Oh, save her! Save her, my bonnie lamb! Heaven have mercy on us!"

"Get out of the way!" cried George, the gardener's boy, all his usual respect for the housekeeper knocked out of him by his frantic anxiety about his mistress. He rushed past her, bounding over every obstacle that lay in his way with the activity of youth; but faster still rushed the waters, as if eager to carry their lovely burthen far away from the reach of helping hands.

Ralph Armitage was doing his very best, and straining every nerve, but the current was as strong as his own desire, and the white

dress floated further and further away, like the blossom of a water-lily detached from its stem.

If Jack Sartoris could have known that the wife whom he had so cruelly misjudged was then drowning in the river which was so familiar to him in his boyhood, and if the wish to come could have given him wings to fly to her rescue, a hundred Lady Janes would not have kept him in London. His strong arms which had yearned after her so longingly would have been stretched to save her; and when her brown head once rested on his breast, neither a woman's treachery nor his own folly would ever have parted them again.

Cyril Landon would have torn himself from the arms of his bride, and tried if pluck would not enable him to do as much for a dear old friend as another man's strength; but those who loved her so honestly and truly were far away from Violet Sartoris in her hour of danger. And there was only one left—an acquaintance of yesterday—a dangerous friend for the future, if future there were, to stand between her and the death she had sought.

A hoarse cry came from Webster and

Milton as the white dress caught on the top of a stake in the river, and Violet's slender form swirled round like a tangle of weeds. George jumped in, though doubtful of his own swimming powers; and Armitage struck out with one supreme effort, and caught a long trail of hair which seemed to be floating towards him in the water.

The next moment she was in his arms, and, breathless and almost overdone, he struggled to the bank, where Mrs. Milton, shaking like a leaf, stood ready to receive her mistress.

They gathered round her, tears running down the butler's cheeks, and George blubbering like a baby. Ralph put them all aside, as the housekeeper said afterwards, "in a masterful manner;" and as soon as he had recovered his breath, lifted Violet in his arms as if she had been a child, and made his way towards the house. Mrs. Milton, in spite of her elderly knees knocking together in a curious fashion, hurried on in front. Webster stood still to recover himself, and to wipe his forehead. George ran to pick up Mr. Armitage's coat and hat. Ralph for a few minutes was alone.

He looked down on the sweet face resting so unconsciously on his shoulder, and a thrill ran through his veins.

Good Heavens! to think that this lovely girl belonged in all the pride of her beauty to a man who had cast her off!

Was Sartoris mad to have such a wife, and not to love her?—to leave her to the care and the friendship, and the tenderness, of any other man who might cross her path?

He swore to himself that Sartoris—the husband who was no husband except in name—had lost all right to her.

The blood rushed to his forehead as he stooped his head, his eager lips burning to snatch a kiss.

There was no one to see—a large willow hid them both from the windows of the Priory; he told himself that he was not a man to be held back by a foolish scruple, that he had just saved her life; but for him she would be as dead as the rose-leaves of a forgotten summer; therefore she belonged to him as much as if he had once put a simple circle of gold upon her finger.

He knew it was a cowardly thing to take advantage of her in her complete unconsciousness. He knew that it would be a stain on his manhood, and yet he bent himself to the base desire, and bent his head so low that his breath must have fanned the deathly whiteness of her cheeks; and then his tardy conscience smote him, or the childlike purity of her face rebuked him, or that spark of chivalry, which most men who are worthy of the name possess, kindled into vigorous life; anyhow, he drew back, ashamed of his conscious baseness—drew back before his lips had sullied the purity of hers.

A minute later he had laid her down on a sofa in the drawing-room; then the whole household gathered round in dismay. There was a hubbub of voices, as one remedy was suggested after another; and telegrams to different relations were discussed, and somebody was sent in hot haste for the doctor.

Mr. Armitage, to do him justice, never lost his head in a crisis. He gave directions, and helped Mrs. Milton to carry them out.

He took one hand, and she the other. They moved each arm up and down, and bent the small head forward on the chest, never stopping till they were rewarded by the first flush of life in the white face.

When the doctor arrived he acknowledged that the same plan of action had been pursued that he himself would have adopted if he had been on the spot, and said that the patient had passed the first crisis.

He looked very grave when Mrs. Milton told him in hushed whispers how the so-called "accident" had happened; and after examining the blow on the forehead, said that he did not think it sufficient to account for such an amount of mental disturbance. There was probably some other cause in the background. He looked suggestively at the faithful old servant, but she only shook her head and sighed.

She knew nothing of the envelope found on the lawn, and had been utterly mystified as to the cause of that midnight run to the station; but whatever she had known she would have kept to herself, for nothing would have induced her to betray her mistress's confidence.

The separation between husband and wife was a constant grief to her, for she had known Jack Sartoris when he was a boy, and had given him quite half of her heart before his forsaken wife appeared to carry off the other.

Her compassion being excited by Violet's desolate position, she watched over her with the tenderness of a nurse rather than with the cold respect of an ordinary servant. She approved of Mr. Landon's attentions to her mistress, and was sure there was no harm in them, because he was the rector's ward, and she knew him as well as if he had been a regular inhabitant of Leighton; but she looked at Ralph Armitage with a suspicious eye, as if he were a wolf with predatory intentions on her pet

lamb; and although he had rendered to Violet the greatest service that a man can render, she was anxious for him to take himself off before Lord and Lady Mayne appeared upon the scene. True, she could explain that he was only there because he had missed his train; but Lady Mayne was sure to ask why he was sleeping at the Priory at all, and then the whole story would come out, and the Viscountess was sure to suspect something dreadful behind the scenes.

Full of these anxieties, she made her way to the drawing-room, where Ralph Armitage was waiting for further news, and after telling him that Mrs. Sartoris was lying quite quiet, and there was every hope that she would fall into a comforting sleep, she began to hum and haw, and made herself very busy about arranging an anti-macassar.

Mr. Armitage looked at her, with a twinkling in his eye, perfectly understanding what she wanted to say.

"I've been studying 'Bradshaw,'" he said, after a pause, "and I don't see how Lady Mayne can possibly be here before a quarter to four."

"No sir. So I hear from Webster; but I wished to say," looking down at the Albanian sofa which did duty for an anti-macassar, and hesitating, "if you are anxious to get back to town, there's no occasion to trouble you to stay, that is to say," hurriedly, "I'll take care to explain to her ladyship exactly how it all happened. And no doubt his lordship will write you a note to thank you for your goodness to the mistress this morning."

"And so you want to get rid of me?" with a quiet smile.

Mrs. Milton started, and looked shocked, as if she had been accused of murder.

"Don't ever go to think such a thing, sir," very earnestly. "Only a gentleman like you is sure to have engagements, and there has been a train at a quarter to two, and if you like to go by it, Webster will manage with the lunch."

"You are very good, as to luncheon I don't care about it; but I'll take myself off, as you wish it. Only I shall be awfully anxious to hear how your mistress is going on."

"I'll send you a telegram myself, sir, if you'll allow me," eagerly, "if you'll take the trouble to write down your address."

He took a card out of his case, with the address of his club upon it, and put it on the table, with a sovereign to pay the minuscule expence. Then, after asking a few more questions about the patient, he went out into the hall, saying he would start at once.

But both Webster and Mrs. Milton felt they could not do enough for him, as he was going to be so kind as to take himself away before the Viscountess's arrival, and insisted upon his eating some of the dainty luncheon which had been prepared from the remains of the supper the night before.

There was a curious smile on Ralph Armitage's face, as he walked through the pleasure-grounds of the Priory. He felt as if he had stepped out of his ordinary life into an exciting drama, the plot of which he could not guess, though he had played an important in it.

Only yesterday morning he had grumbled excessively at being dragged down to the country for a humdrum wedding, maintaining that he had half a hundred engagements, which ought to have kept him in London; and then the sight of a flowerlike face, framed in a simple grey bonnet, seemed suddenly to change the village of Leighton into a terrestrial paradise; and London, with all its crowds and pleasures, faded into insignificance beside it. For some reason, best known to himself, he did not go near his sister, so that Lady Jane was for a long time unaware of Violet's illness. Mr. Armitage mentioned the scene by the river to no one, and Lady Mayne kept equally silent. She knew how soon evil reports were spread, and how easily the delirium of brain fever might be construed into madness; therefore Bertie Mayne and

Lady Stapleton were the only people who knew anything of the attempt at suicide besides the father and mother, and the man who had rushed to the rescue.

Mrs. Milton had done very unwisely when she hurried Ralph Armitage away before Lady Mayne arrived. The Viscountess was surprised that he and his sister had slept at the Priory; aghast at the thought that he had stayed behind when Lady Jane went up to town, and very much offended at his going away without stopping to explain matters to the anxious parents.

"Sneaking away like that!" she said to her husband, when, after a long afternoon spent by the patient's bedside, they both came down to the dining-room to partake of a hurried dinner. "I tell you what it looks like, as if he didn't dare to face us. There must be something we know nothing about in the background."

"From what I've heard of Armitage's character he's not a man I could trust," said the Viscount, with a touch of annoyance in his tone. "I wonder where on earth Violet picked him up?"

"Wherever she picked him up she needn't have brought him home with her," said his wife severely. "I can't understand it. Violet used to be very particular. I remember her telling me that she never even invited such an old friend as Cyril Landon to the house."

"That was carrying propriety unnecessarily far. Why bless me, Cyril was like a brother to her! I never heard such nonsense. But we've never known the whole story about Violet and her wretched husband. We've always taken it for granted that he was the only one to blame; but, depend upon it, if there had not been faults on both sides, the poor girl would have confided in you long ago. Nowwoman could hold her tongue year after year unless she had a thundering good reason for doing so."

Lady Mayne shook her head and sighed, as her thoughts went back to the day of her daughter's marriage, and she remembered what a happy future she had dreamt of for her eldest girl.

Those bright hopes were blasted at once, and now, after this encounter with Ralph Armitage, society would be certain to seize upon the poor girl's name, and weave a scandal round it.

What would Bertie say when he arrived by the first train he could catch?

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIRST DOOR.

"Give him back to me!" cried Violet, with parched lips, as her head tossed restlessly on her pillow; and her lovely eyes bright with fever wandered from face to face, as if trying to compel an answer to her piteous cry. "Oh, give him back! Hack! hack! he is calling me! I know he's here. I hear his step; let me go to him, let me go!"

Then she would raise herself up, and try to throw off the clothes, preparatory to jumping out of bed, but her mother laid a restraining hand upon her shoulder, and Mrs. Milton, with the tears running down her cheeks, stood close by the bedside ready to stop her mistress from any rash action.

The trained nurse was on the other side of the bed watching "the case" with an imperious expression on her peasant, careworn face.

The Viscount was in the dressing-room with his son, a good-looking young fellow of about six and twenty.

Each had a newspaper in his hand, but neither knew much of its contents, for that piteous voice from the next room was all absorbing in its wild, incoherent appeal. And as the father and brother listened their hearts rose up in fiercest anger against the absent husband, who had deserted his bride on her wedding-day, and brought her to this desperate position.

Neither would have stirred a hand to let him know! They took it for granted that there was not a remnant of tenderness left in his heart, and that the most welcome news that could be sent him would be that the tie which had galled him was broken for ever.

If Violet died now in the prime of her youthful beauty, Bertie told himself angrily that Jack Sartoris would be her murderer; and it incensed him to think that this peculiar sort of moral murder was exactly the kind which would never bring the murderer to the gallows. If he came to England he might cut him dead when he met him, either in the club or the street; but that would not do him much harm, and probably would not cost him a moment's uneasiness.

And yet he remembered the time when he considered Jack Sartoris as the best fellow out, and thought his sister lucky to get such an excellent husband.

According to what he remembered of him, he would have said that he was the last man in the world to cast off a girl who had trusted herself to him without the most ample and the direst amount of cause.

If his wife had been anyone but his sister he would have taken it for granted that she was certainly in the wrong, and that Sartoris had discovered something terrible about her, which he was too chivalrous to divulge; but as to Violet he could take his oath that there was nothing queer about her.

She was as pure as the daisies on the lawn, with no more thought of ill in her innocent heart than in a child of six.

He had been so proud of her when she first came out, and one man after another fell head over ears in love with his pretty sister.

He considered then that no one was good enough for her except Jack Sartoris, and he told his mother that she would have the best son-in-law in England.

His confidence in his friend never failed him; till the startling news reached the home circle that the bride was with her aunt at Millefleurs, and the bridegroom gone away on his travels.

He went over to France at once, telling his father that he would find out the reason why, or not his hat; but after a few days he came back looking crestfallen, for he was obliged to confess that he was no wiser than when he started.

Violet would explain nothing, in spite of his urgent exhortations, which gradually developed into entreaties; neither would she come back to England to be stared at by all her acquaintances.

For the present, she told him, she meant to stay with Lady Stapleton; for the future her plans were undecided.

He remembered it all as if it had been yesterday—his mother's tears, his father's anger, the wonder and dismay of his other sister—and, thinking over it, he cursed Jack Sartoris as the destroyer of Violet's happiness.

The old friendship which had been so dear to them both was forgotten, and the bitterest enmity awoke in its stead.

Perhaps if Bertie could have seen his old friend standing in the Countess of Oldthorpe's drawing-room, his face haggard, his eyes fixed with positively hungry longing on Lady Jane's eager face, he would have misjudged him still more, and never guessed that the anxiety and the longing were all for the deserted wife, and not for Lady Jane herself.

Her heart was in a flutter of excitement as she looked up into the face which was so strangely changed by a long deadly illness, as well as by the growth of a beard and the passing of many years, that few of his friends recognised him.

It was changed; but she thought it just as handsome as ever, although in a different style, and it had a charm for her still that none other possessed, and she was just as wickedly anxious as ever to keep him away from the only woman who had a right to his affections.

She told herself that he had been stolen from her, and with this salve to her conscience went on, adding evasion to evasion till the evasions grew into downright lies, and the lies into grossest treachery.

Perfectly honest and straightforward himself, he trusted her completely. Cyril Landon's marriage startled him almost into distrust; but, as we have seen, Lady Jane with her cunning tongue turned the event to her own advantage.

"You are certain that blow on the head was not serious?" he said earnestly, looking down into her face with a searching glance that made her voice falter. It was so hard not to tell the whole truth when under the fire of his eyes. She moved her own away from his before she answered.

"Quite certain—I saw her myself this morning sleeping like a healthy child; and, as I told you, I passed the whole night at the Priory, so I ought to know something about it."

"It was very good of you"—gratefully. "I am glad the poor child has one friend to look after her. I hope it didn't put you to great inconvenience? You had your brother with you, I believe?"

"Last night—yes; but I had to come up all by myself," raising her eyebrows pathetically, "and I didn't like it."

"How was that?" quickly.

"Because my brother liked the Priory too much to leave it."

"He stayed behind!" his voice shaking with concentrated rage. "Then I think the sooner I run down the better," stooping to pick up his hat. "At least, I can act the part of a watch-dog."

She saw the mistake she had made, and hastened to retrieve it.

"Nonsense! He only missed his train, the lazy fellow! You would not find him if you went; and you would do your wife any amount of harm. There will be nothing to keep him—that old woman with the substantial waist won't let her mistress leave her room, you may be sure of that—and he would only feel horribly dull downstairs, with no one to speak to."

"Still I think I shall go."

She rose in great excitement, her light eyes absolutely glittering with eagerness.

"Go, and kill your wife if you like! After keeping away from her for six years, and making her the talk of London, rush helter-skelter down to see her when she has just had a bad fall, and the slightest excitement might turn her brain. Do you want to see her in a madhouse?"

"I want to see her in her own home"—doggedly. "I'm sick to death of this lonely kind of life. And now that Landon's out of the way—"

"Out of the way—for how long? Does his marriage of yesterday make any real difference? If there was a reason for you to turn your back on your wife six years ago, isn't there a reason still? Have you seen the present Mrs. Landon? A girl as thin as a lathe, with consumption painted on her cheeks? She will soon be removed to another sphere after having served as a buffer against scandal for a time?"

Sartoris ground his heel into the fluffy surface of the carpet. Had he been a fool to come back? Had his longings been all folly? Had his growing conviction that he had parted from his young wife too rashly been nothing more than a sentimental delusion? How could he tell, with this woman's deceitful words pouring into his unwilling ears?

"Tell me frankly," his deep voice not so steady as usual; "has she ever seemed to want me?"

Lady Jane was silent for a whole minute. She remembered Violet's intense eagerness about that envelope, because there was her husband's handwriting upon it.

She remembered the anxious questions she had asked, and the look of silent sorrow which rested like a blight on the lovely face; and yet, remembering all this, she looked away

from him, as she answered, with affected carelessness,—

"If she really wants you, I think she consoles herself pretty well."

"You mean that she plays on the piano. She was always fond of that, and she still enjoys sketching?"

As a matter of fact Lady Jane was not aware that Violet had ever touched either pencil or paint brush, but she had a fortis mind, and instantly imagined the circumstances to be as she wished them to be. Therefore she answered reflectively,—

"As to sketching, I daresay she likes it very well when she has somebody pleasant always at hand to put the finishing touches, or say a word about the lights and shadows; and there is nothing so nice as to play to a thoroughly appreciative listener. Cyril, you know, is as musical as a young Beethoven."

"I did not know it," bitterly. "Pray, is he an artist as well?"

"Of course he is, and nothing delights him more than to have a pretty woman for his pupil."

"By Heaven! if I caught him teaching my wife!" frowning angrily.

"But then you wouldn't catch him," quietly; and after a pause she added,—

"When are you off again?"

He bit his lip, as he leaned his elbow against the mantelpiece. A glimmer of distrust crossed his mind. Was it possible that Lady Jane, for some reason of her own, wished to keep him separated from his wife?

But what reason could there be for such a wish—supposing she liked him as she used to seven or eight years ago?

It was not a liking which could last through one long year after the other; and even supposing that it had lasted, it would do her no good to keep them apart.

Even if she were base enough to desire it she could derive no benefit from it, for he could not marry her, and he would only go away, and she would never see him from year's end to year's end.

It was a shameful thing to doubt her, when she was the only one of his friends who had the womanliness to think of him in his loneliness, and to send him tidings of his poor wife.

He crossed the room hastily, and stood before her, whilst she dropped almost trembling into a chair.

"You wouldn't deceive me, would you, Lady Jane?"

"Deceive you?" she gasped, feeling like a conspirator unmasked.

He was ashamed of the thought, even as he spoke it out.

"You have no ill-feeling against the poor girl?"

"Jack, you insult me!" starting to her feet, and quivering with fright and excitement, taking refuge in rage, as many a craftier plotter has done before when pressed by an awkward question.

"Forgive me. I was a brute," overcome with compunction, "but I'm so bothered; 'pon my word I scarcely know what I'm saying;" and he wrung her hand in a hearty grasp, to show his penitence and his undoubting trust for the future. Then he took up his hat, and went out of the room, leaving Lady Jane alone with her conscience!

## CHAPTER XII.

### A CRIME.

VIOLET SARTORIS lay for a long time in the cheerful bedroom where Lady Jane had seen her hovering between life and death. The same cry was always on her lips, whenever suffering from an access of delirium. The name which Lady Mayne had grown to hate was always ringing in her ears. Driven almost to distraction, she would have sent for the man who had brought this trouble and anxiety upon them if she had known that he was in England. Sometimes she thought they

ought to send for him in any case, and then, imagining that perhaps he might be at the furthest extremity of Siberia, if the summons ever reached him, and he answered it in person, he might arrive to find his wife quite well, and the pride of the whole Mayne family would have been lowered for nothing. To ask him to come back would be so dreadful, and she would be so much more comfortable without him. In fact she felt that she could not support the idea of his sitting on one side of her daughter, and herself on the other, and taking the management of the sick-room out of her hands into his own. It would be difficult even to stay in the same house with him after all that had passed, especially as the Priory was his property, and never had really belonged to his wife. So that when Lord Mayne conscientiously suggested that perhaps Sartoris ought to be sent for, the idea was scouted at once by Bertie and Gertrude, as well as by his wife. Gertrude had done her duty by her family, and married a young Earl not long after Violet's ill-starred union.

Her husband, Lord Woodbridge, was inveterate in his anger against a man who by his extraordinary conduct had caused such havoc to his sister-in-law's peace. If he didn't want to have her, why did he ask her to marry him? Why should he pick out such an innocent girl as Violet Mayne, of irreproachable antecedents, of aristocratic birth, of unusual beauty, to cast a slur upon her in the first hours of their short-lived union? Lord Woodbridge had no patience with such a ruffian; and of course his pretty wife, who was so desperately fond of her sister, hated Jack Sartoris with a fierceness that was not natural to one of her gentle disposition. She was always saying, with a flash of her blue eyes, that if she could meet him she would give him a piece of her mind; but as she never met him, he still went about unharmed.

The tears rolled down her cheeks as she heard Violet calling for him so wildly; but instead of trying to satisfy her she only took it as a further proof of her wandering mind, and said, "Poor dear! she wouldn't want him if she knew what she was about!"

Thus it was that those who loved her best, as well as the one who hated her most, fought against the unhappy wife's true interest. Over that sick bed, peace might have been made between the two almost without an explanation.

Jack Sartoris loved her too truly not to be touched by her wasted cheeks and haggard eyes. At the first sight of her poor little face, which when he last saw it was so bright with beauty and youth, he would have taken her to his heart, and asked for nothing better than to keep her there for ever.

But it was not to be, for mistaken affection and a woman's hatred born of jealousy, strove against it.

Lady Jane, when she heard that Violet was ill, trembled, and lay awake night after night, but yet she kept the news to herself; and only told him that the Maynes had established themselves at the Priory, which she knew was enough to prevent him from going down.

She was in fever to get him out of London; and yet it was a delight to have him dropping in day after day, though it was only to talk over the old topic, which she hated, with all her heart.

Very few of his friends knew he was in town; and his appearance was so altered, that when he went to the Carlton nobody recognized him—not even the porter, whose duty it was never to forget the face of a member.

The yellow fever which he had caught in New Orleans, and of which he had nearly died alone amongst strangers, had changed him completely. He lost all his hair, and when it grew again the bright golden chestnut had changed to a shade that was nearly black; added to which, instead of only having a heavy moustache on his short upper lip, he grew a beard which covered up entirely the lower part of his face. The fever could not take his beauty of feature from him, but the

brightness of his complexion had gone; and instead of looking, as before, a handsome example of an Englishman, he might almost have been taken for a Spaniard or Italian, except for the cut of his hat.

In his great unselfishness he kept away from his own people, lest they might question him about his wife, and from his silence suspect something to her disadvantage.

At last, tired of London without the usual crowd of friends, bringing with them a list of engagements, which though sometimes a bore to keep gave him a pleasant feeling of being in request, he made up his mind to start for Russia.

Before leaving England he would run down to Farndon Court in Devonshire, and he would write a letter to his wife, offering to come back to her, to let bygones be bygones, without one word about the past; without requiring a single promise for the future if only she would frankly confess that she wanted him.

From her answer he must learn what he most wanted to know—whether she still had a shred of love for him.

Unfortunately on his way to the post he called on Lady Jane, and told her of his intention.

She turned as white as her own handkerchief, and for a minute was dumb, knowing that if the letter once reached Violet's hands all her plans would be upset, and her treachery would be exposed in the eyes of the man she loved so recklessly.

After that one minute, when she felt utterly staggered, her presence of mind returned. He had taken the letter out of his pocket, and was studying the address as if it had a fascination for him.

He was so absorbed that he never noticed Lady Jane's agitation, or that she went up to an ornamental little writing-table, and took another letter from inside a blotting-book,

"You want it to go by the half-past four?" she said, glancing at the clock.

"Yes, I have a fancy for posting it myself," rising from his seat, as if on the point of departure.

"I can understand that!" with a forced smile; "but you know it will be quite safe if I send it by George; and my mother really wants to speak to you. She told me to keep you if you happened to look in, as she wants to ask your advice about Ned Clinton."

She rang the bell as she spoke.

"What about him?"

"He is thinking of trying farming in Virginia, and she thought you could tell us if there was any chance of success."

"I know very little about it. One farmer told me that for three years his crops had been ruined by a succession of floods, so he was trying his hand at horse-dealing, and making money by it too. You can tell Lady Oldthorpe."

"No, I can't tell her!" hurriedly. "She never trusts my messages; she says I always forget. Here's George; give me the letter."

She almost snatched it from his hand, and went quickly towards the footman without waiting for him to come up to her.

On her way she slipped Sartoris's letter into her pocket, and it was the other one which she had taken from the blotting-book, which she gave to George with strict directions to post it at once, and come back and tell her if it were really in time. Then she ran to Jack, her heart beating fast with excitement.

"You see nothing can be safer than that. I only told him to let me know if it were in time, in order to satisfy you. Do sit down; my mother will be here directly."

He sat down, feeling rather cross, and as if he had done a foolish thing; but he told himself that there was no reason why the Oldthorpe's footman should not take his letter as safely as himself, and that he was really a fool to be so fidgety.

He was so absorbed with his own reflections that he noticed nothing odd in Lady

Jane's manner, though her thoughts seemed to be straying unaccountably, for she answered some of his questions quite wrong.

Lady Oldthorpe did not appear for such a long time that he was tired of waiting for her, and went away with a strange feeling of dissatisfaction clinging to him.

As soon as he was gone Lady Jane drew the letter from her pocket, took it out of the envelope, and tore it straight across—resisting the temptation to read it—as if it mattered much whether she read it or not, when she had been so base as to steal it!

Her eyes dashed with rage and triumph as with slow, deliberate malice she tore the words of peace and forgiveness into undecipherable atoms.

Her better angel kept whispering in her ear that this was a fiendish act, only worthy of the lowest of her sex; but she would not listen. Her hatred was burning more fiercely than the flame with which she consumed the scraps on the pretty painted tiles inside the fender.

Her face was flushed, her brain in a fever, her hands cold and clammy. She stood in the fancifully-furnished boudoir like some statue of Medusa.

At her feet lay the happiness of two lives. In her hands, but a few minutes before, she held the links which were to bind them together; now by her own act she had separated them perhaps for ever.

And there was something else beyond this—whether above or below one can scarcely say. She had taken the irrevocable step; she had chosen evil instead of good. From comparative innocence she had plunged with one bound into crime. She had dipped her aristocratic hands not into blood, but into the mire which clings and soils, and breeds corruption.

For a moment she triumphed in her sin, and laughed aloud; but the sound of her own laughter startled her, and the noise of an opening door made her shake like a convicted thief.

She had deceived Jack Sartoris, she had cruelly injured his young wife; but she had not damped her conscience, and in the silence of the night, when there was no music or conversation to distract her, she knew herself for the contemptible sinner that she was—and yet she was farther off from penitence than ever.

(To be continued.)

**THE CHARMING GIRL**—The charming girl is companionable. But she does not fall in love any more. It would be impossible for the truly charming girl to fall in love in the old-fashioned way, the way which led the amiable predecessor of the Angelina type to set her affections on a villain or an idiot and cling to him through thick and thin with a fidelity and a rapture that looks very silly to the charming girl. She knows herself better than ever a girl knew herself before. She is taught wisely and well by her careful mother, and no man can surprise her heart into surrender unless he has at least a few of the elements of genuine manliness and nobility, attractions of mind and spirit as well as of face and manner. Of course there is a sham charming girl, who doesn't fall in love because she has no heart to lose, having wasted it all in admiration of herself and her pretty gowns. This inconsequent and effective little sham knows enough, however, to imitate the ways of the girl who is genuinely charming, and she gets up a very clever and interesting counterfeit oftentimes, and one which is extremely good to look at on a pleasant summer's day. By and-by, when the ideal girl comes to bless the world, there will, without doubt, be a sweet and pretty sham of her also to be found at the shore and mountain resorts, whom the sham men then upon the earth will flirt with to their hearts' content, while the ideal man will bow at the shrine of the ideal girl.

## THE ARTFUL LOVER.

—o—

Alvaren came one day to woo,  
The prettiest girl he ever knew,  
And thought she seemed so good and fair,  
He might his honest love declare.

But this is just the trying part—  
For how to test his loved one's heart  
And win his suit, he did not know;  
And yet he knew he loved her so.

He could not rest, nor work, nor play—  
Her vision met him night and day;  
But when he spoke his thought at last,  
Her face looked sat and overcast.

She ceased to smile—her heart seemed whole;  
There was no tremor in her soul;  
She claimed she could no love impart,  
But pitied him with all her heart.

Now, what did young Alvaren do?  
He did not die, nor cease to woo;  
Her "friend" she said he still might be,  
And so he waited patiently.

He played the part with skill and grace—  
He learned to wait and watch her face;  
Meekly he sat beneath her will,  
And, without telling, loved her still.

To be her "friend" so hard he strove,  
He turned her pity into love;  
And every lad who knows this art,  
May hope to win some maiden's heart.

J. B.

## TWICE CHOSEN.

—o—

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

The good-natured Duke let his wife go back to Lyneston early in September, to help the Countess with various arrangements for her marriage, and promised to run down for a few days' shooting the following week.

Lady Lyneston had written to Colonel Egerton to tell him of her engagement; and when he read her letter his fury knew no bounds.

That this Lord Carruthers should trifle with the affections of the woman he loved, and divide her from him, as he had done; and then turn from her to another, was unbearable.

No doubt it was the Countess's wealth which had tempted him, but she should not be thus duped.

He obtained leave and hastened to England.

If his uncle's widow married this man, she should do it with her eyes opened, with the full knowledge of his unmanly conduct.

He was in a perfect fury through the whole journey from Malta to Lyneston, and startled her by coming in upon her without the faintest notice of his advent.

Her lover and the Duke had arrived the night before, and she felt pleased that she would be able to introduce them both to him.

"Gracious, Cecil!" she said, kindly. "Have you dropped from the clouds? Who ever expected to see you? Well, though unexpected you are not the less welcome, believe me. I did not know you were in England," and she shook his hand warmly.

"I have come over in answer to your letter, Rosamond," he said, gravely. "You cannot know what sort of a man this Lord Carruthers is, or you would scarcely have given your happiness into his hands. You shall not become his wife if I can help it. My good old uncle wished me to be your friend and adviser, and I have come home to help you. It will be a blow to you, I daresay, but Rosamond, my dear aunt, you must give him up."

The Countess became very pale.

"I cannot believe anything against the man I love," she said, firmly. "If you have aught to say to his detriment, speak plainly, Colonel Egerton."

"Would you marry a black-hearted villain?" he asked, in agitation.

"Certainly not," she replied, with quiet dignity.

"Then that is what this man is."

"You must either prove your words, or apologize for them, Cecil."

"I will prove them."

He sprang from his chair, and paced the room in great excitement, then stopped before her suddenly.

"Rosamond, have you ever guessed that I have suffered? Have you ever guessed that all my love was once given to a woman, and the happiness of my life wrecked?" he asked, with emotion.

She forgot her anger towards him, and looked up at him with kindly sympathy.

"I have thought you unhappy, Cecil, often."

"And do you know who ruined my peace of mind? No, how should you? It was this man whom you would wed, Lord Carruthers! You know the girl I loved; it was Adela Thorndyke! She and I were engaged, and he stepped in between us, and made her false to me; and having taken her from me, having parted us, he had not the honour to marry her himself. Such men ought to be hunted out of society. They are the curse of it," he said, fiercely. "Do you think such a man is calculated to make you happy?"

Lady Lyneston sat in deep thought, while Colonel Egerton again paced the room like a caged panther.

"Cecil," she answered, gently, "don't you think there has been some ugly mistake? Lord Carruthers did love Adela; he told me so himself, but he was never able to gain her affection."

The soldier's face worked with passion.

"He deceives you! I heard him speak words of love to her, not the pleading of a man who seeks, but such as are born of mutual confidence. I saw him give her letters too, and she held meetings with him, clandestine meetings."

Lady Lyneston got up and rang the bell, and when the servant entered she asked if Lord Carruthers were within the house, and was informed that he had just returned from shooting, and was in his own room.

So she desired the butler should let his lordship know that she wished to see him as soon as possible in the drawing-room, and the man went to obey her orders.

No word passed between these two for some time; then Rosamond went to Cecil Egerton's side, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Cecil," she said, "you will be happy yet. Reginald can explain it all, I am sure."

"Explain!" he returned bitterly; "he may forge a story to satisfy a confiding woman, but not one which will deceive a man of the world. No, Rosamond, there can be no joy for me in this life!"

The door opened, and Lord Carruthers and Colonel Egerton stood face to face.

The Countess watched their meeting with actual surprise, for upon the countenance of neither was there the faintest sign of recognition.

Her fiance came to her side at once.

"Did you send for me, Rosamond?" he asked, unconcernedly.

"Yes, I wanted you to see my nephew, Colonel Egerton," she answered. "You have met before, I think."

He advanced with outstretched hand.

"No; I have never had that pleasure," he replied, "and am glad that we have met at last. I have often heard of you, Colonel Egerton, and I hope we shall prove good friends."

"This is not Lord Carruthers!" said Cecil, looking from one to the other in bewilderment.

"Of course it is," she laughed; "if you

won't believe me you can refer to the Duke and Duchess of St. Ives, who are now staying with me. Cecil, it strikes me you are labouring under some great misapprehension."

"It appears that I am," he replied, gravely.

"Rosamond, I freely apologise. This is not the gentleman to whom I referred. I withdraw my former remarks and opposition."

Then he turned to Lord Carruthers.

"I have unintentionally borne false witness against you," he said, with a faint smile, "but I cannot explain my error to you, as it involves a lady's name. I mistook you for someone else, for whom I have not a kindly feeling. Now, if you will offer me your hand again I can clasp it with satisfaction. I congratulate both you and Lady Lyneston heartily, and if I can give you away, Rosamond, before I return to my regiment, I will do so with pleasure."

"I should like that of all things," said the Countess; "and you will stay with us, Cecil?"

"I am afraid I shall prove restless, Rosamond, but I will stay if you promise not to be offended should I suddenly be missing. You see I have long been my own master, that if the freak takes me to go anywhere, or do anything, I go, and ask no one."

"We will not trammel your old bachelor ways," she laughed. "Come and go when you like, Cecil; we will ask no questions either when you vanish or reappear."

So it was settled that Colonel Egerton should remain, and he did so.

The marriage was fixed for that day month, and arrangements for the happy event went briskly on.

The Colonel spoke the truth when he asserted that he was restless.

He went away sometimes for hours, sometimes for days, and said nothing of his movements, taking Lady Lyneston ather word, and resuming his place in the house as the privileged person he was.

"My dear," said the Duchess of St. Ives, "your nephew is a very charming man when he chooses, but surely he must be some very near relation to the 'Wandering Jew'? He never seems happy two days running in the same place. What a very uncomfortable sort of husband he would make?"

"Perhaps he is not very happy," returned Lady Lyneston, leniently; "and I do not mind his coming and going as he does at all."

"You ever were a kind little creature, Rosie," said the elder woman, affectionately. "Lord Carruthers ought to be well contented with his choice."

"I think he is," she answered, half shyly; "and I know I am with mine."

He had entered the room in time to hear her remark, and laid his hand upon her shoulder, looking lovingly down into her speaking face, and the Duchess slipped away before they perceived her absence.

He passed his arm through hers, and drew her to the window. Cecil Egerton was walking up and down the garden with a bent head.

"My darling, Egerton is a good fellow, but a very miserable one, I fear; can we do nothing to dispel the clouds which appear to envelop him?"

The Countess watched him, and her face saddened.

"I wish we could, but I don't know how it is to be done."

Then after a pause she added,— "Reginald, I cannot bear having secrets from you, even though they are other people's. I must tell you about poor Cecil's trouble, and you will feel for him. I should have told you before, but somehow it seems to throw blame upon Adela, and I did not like to do that."

"Upon Adela?" he said, in surprise.

"Yes, dear! Cecil has loved her for years, and it appears that at one time he was engaged to her."

"He must then be the man she has so long worshipped!" he cried excitedly. "My

darling, you must throw them together again. It will all come right yet, I hope."

"I don't know, Reginald. He says she gave him up for someone else, and, strange to relate, he thought you were the man who had separated him until he saw you."

"He has seen his rival then?" he asked, with a puzzled look.

"Evidently!"

He looked out at the figure pacing the terrace.

"He has made some mistake," he said, decidedly. "I am convinced that he is the individual for whose sake Adela refused me three times."

"Three times!" repeated the Countess, with a pained start.

"Just so, dearest," he answered with heart-whole honesty, "and she cured me by showing me her fervent affection and admiration for Cecil Egerton."

"Did she tell you it was for Cecil?"

"Certainly not, my little innocent."

"If you are right, Reginald," she said, reflectively, "who can it be that made him so jealous?"

"I cannot imagine! Rosie, why don't you ask her?"

"Rex," she replied, "I will, I really will, and that will end the matter. And now I want your advice. Do you think I might invite her to our wedding? Then she would meet Cecil, and who knows what might take place?" she ended, brightly.

"You must not let him know she is coming," he laughed, "or he would be off like a shot."

"I have thought of that," she said, joining in his fun; "and I have decided that you and the Duke must take him out shooting, and not let him come home till nearly dinner time, so that they will meet in the drawing room when the guns sound, and there will be no loophole for retreat."

"You're a clever little woman, Rosie!" and he drew her closer to his side. "Mark my words, it will all come right for Adela and for Egerton. Poor Adela! She has suffered terribly; she has such a strange far off pathetic look now, Rosie, you would grieve to see it."

"I am sure I should—but Rex, suppose she won't come?"

"We must persuade her. I think she will, for she is very fond of us both, and if she thought her absence would vex us, she would put her own sorrow aside and come. She is very unselfish and generous. What exceedingly nice letters she wrote to us both when she heard of our engagement! You can tell her, Rosie, how very quiet our wedding is to be."

"Of course I will, and so must you. We will both write."

"Very well, pet, we will. Hallo! what has become of Egerton? I thought he was training for a place in the Zoo; but he has lengthened his tether this time, and taken himself out of sight," and that was the last they saw of him for several days.

Sir Richard had kept his word. A new Rectory was being built for Bob Lake, close to the church, and he had made a deed of gift of the old one to Mrs. Thorndyke.

It was so totally unexpected that the thought of going back to her old home upset her even more than leaving it had done. Sir Richard was standing with a sad and bewildered face, talking to Horace.

"My boy, what things women are!" he said, impatiently. "One never knows how to take them. I have turned Bob out of his rightful home, because poor Thorndyke's widow nearly broke her heart at the thought of leaving it; and now it is her own to return to when she likes, and she receives the news with a flood of tears, enough to shake a man's nerves for the remainder of his life. I thought she would be overjoyed, and I'm disappointed!"

"That is just it, Sir Richard; she is overjoyed," said Horace, with a smile. "The hap-

piness was almost too much for her. She had dreaded going out into the world to find a new home, but she had strung up her nerves to bear it. Suddenly all the pressure has been removed, and the relief has been too great to be expressed in words. She is strung, now that the strain is over; I can understand her feelings."

In another moment Adela made a third in the group.

She came up to the Baronet with both hands outstretched, and a look of excitement upon her pale face.

"How good you are!" she said, simply. "Poor mother! next to losing dear father came losing her home in the scale of sorrow, and you have given her back this great comfort. Oh! Sir Richard, let me thank you for her, until she can find words to do so herself."

"Is she really pleased?" he asked, dubiously.

"Pleased!" she echoed. "The word does not one quarter express her thankfulness, nor mine," she added.

"Well, Adela, I am very, very glad to have been of some little use to you and your mother," he said, with a gratified look. "My dear, may you both be very happy in your old home. You will find every thing there just as you left it."

So Mrs. Thorndyke and Adela returned to Winthorpe Old Rectory, as it was now called, and their first act was to place a white cross over their dear one's resting-place. It was very chaste and pure looking, and massive too, standing alone in the bend of the chancel in a little garden, and they planted ferns and flowers about, to keep it bright and beautiful.

Adela and her mother were falling back into their old places in the parish. Everyone appealed to them as of yore. Bob Lake had gone away for a time, but was shortly to return, and take possession of his new home.

In the meanwhile a "locum tenens" had been found to take his duties, who unfortunately seemed to give satisfaction to no one, from Sir Richard to the poorest man in the parish. So he did not have a very lively time of it.

One afternoon, as Adela was dressing a cross of blossoms to place upon her father's grave, Horace and Lillian came in to afternoon tea.

"I won't be long, Lill," said Adela, "but I want just to carry these flowers to the churchyard. You won't mind chatting with mother till I come back, will you?"

"Not I; we shall be very glad to get rid of you," answered her friend brightly. "And Horace shall be your beast of burden, won't you, dear?"

"Rather!" he exclaimed, jumping up, and taking forcible possession of the tin.

"Don't, Horace! you will spill the water!" she cried. "See! you have upset it all down your trousers."

"Well if I have," he laughed, "it won't hurt."

"But our carpets will! What a slop you are making! There won't be a drop of water left in it by the time we get there."

"Then you shall carry a jug of water to refill it," he decided; and thus laden the two went off side by side.

The corner where the Rector rested was hidden from the path they traversed by the church wall; and when they turned the sudden angle, a man was leaning over the grave, placing on it a rarely beautiful wreath of white flowers.

At the sound of their footsteps he looked up, and the eyes of Adela Thorndyke and Cecil Egerton met once more.

A spasm of uncontrollable joy swept through her heart, and set it beating wildly, but Horace was by her side again, and Cecil's looks and words were cold.

"I came to visit my old friend's resting-place," he said gravely, taking off his hat to

her; "but I had no idea of intruding upon you, believe me."

"My mother would be glad to see you; she would like to thank you for the flowers," faltered poor Adela, extending her hand, which he touched as a stranger might do.

"I have felt very much grieved at the loss of my old brother officer," he continued, with some show of feeling, "and can sympathize with you and Mrs. Thorndyke in your trouble."

Tears rolled up into the girl's eyes, and blinded her, and held her voice captive.

Again he touched her finger-tips, and again he raised his hat, and once more she was alone.

They had yet again met and parted. Horace had moved on among the tombstones, but seeing that the Colonel was gone, he returned to Adela's side.

"Are you ready to place the flowers, Adela?" he asked, taking no notice of her sad and agitated face.

"Do it for me to-day, Horace," she answered, leaning up against the church for support. "I—I—don't feel very well."

He did as she bade him, then drew her hand within his arm.

"Come, Adela," he said kindly, "I shall take you home; you're not the thing, and ought not to have come out at all. You must have change of air."

But for all that he felt certain that Cecil Egerton had been the cause of her sudden indisposition.

"Well, perhaps I shall," she answered, wearily. "Lady Lyneston wants me so very much to go down to her wedding, and does not object to my black garments. I have no heart for it, Horace; but since she and Lord Carruthers are, next to you and Lill and Sir Richard, my dearest friends, I hardly see my way to refusing, when they make such a point of it, and they assure me it is to be a very quiet affair."

"Of course you must go!" he said, decided, and chattered on till they reached the old Rectory.

And Cecil Egerton stood, unseen, watching them ascend the hill, gnawing the ends of his brown moustache fiercely the while.

"Fool that I was to come here," he muttered, as he struck off for the road leading to the station.

She went up to her own chamber when they reached the Rectory, and Horace beckoned Lillian from the room.

"That confounded old young man has turned up again, Lill," he said; "and has upset poor Adela, just as she was getting a little better. She has gone upstairs; don't you think you had better go and look after her?"

"What, Cecil Egerton!" cried Lillian; "and you say he has gone again?"

"I didn't say so, Lill, but I haven't a doubt of it. He looked more like the ghost in Hamlet than ever. Evidently tragedy is the gentleman's line; an inoffensive pretentious fellow. I feel quite antagonistic towards him."

"Never mind your feelings, old man, think of Adela's. Can't you stop him anyhow?"

"I? Bless me, child, you must be losing your reason; I don't even know the man. How can I run after him and say, Hi! you here, my Lillian says you're to come back?"

"No, no, of course you can't; but, oh! Horace, I am so sorry for Scamp," and she hurried upstairs after her friend.

Horace stood looking at her retreating form. "I always felt sure there was someone, but I am sorry it is that fellow," he said in a tone of disgust, and turned into the drawing-room to keep Mrs. Thorndyke from looking after the girls, and, all praise to his discretion, he did not mention Adela's meeting with her father's old friend.

"Oh! Lillian, Lillian!" cried Adela, as she clasped her in her arms. "I have seen him again; and my heart will break."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

LORD AND LADY LYNESTONE.

WHEN Colonel Egerton returned to Lyneston he was more thoughtful, more sad, than ever. There was a new vein of bitterness and moroseness in his speeches, and thoughts, which somewhat astonished his hearers; but preparations for the wedding kept them all fully occupied, and they had but little time to analyse the feelings of the cynical Colonel.

After much persuasion, Adela had promised to come a few days before the wedding, so as to see a little of Rosamond before she should leave Lyneston with her husband, and the Countess was looking forward to her visit very much, and drove to the station to meet her, Cecil having been spirited away to a distant cover after the long-tails.

The meeting between the friends was a very warm one, and Rosamond talked to Adela about Lord Carruthers without reserve, letting her know fully that she was aware of the love for her, which had existed so long in his heart; and thus they chatted on until Lyneston came in sight.

"Is it not a dear old place, Adela?" she said, as the girl's eyes rested upon it in deep admiration. "You know it would have belonged to our mutual friend, my husband's nephew, if Lord Lyneston had not married me," and she looked intently at Adela, whose speaking face changed painfully. "What don't you still like Colonel Egerton?" asked the wicked little Countess, in feigned surprise.

"We used to be friends once," she faltered, "but we have scarcely met for years."

"Well! he has not forgotten you, Adela; but stay, I must tell you the rest when we get indoors. Here is the avenue; is it not a grand one? Would it not have been strange if you had been the mistress here instead of me?" she laughed.

Adela Thorndyke flushed hotly, and followed her hostess from the carriage up the steps, into the fine old Hall, and the creaking staircase, into a room like a fairy's bower, which had been prepared expressly for her, all satin wood, and pale blue satin and lace, with delicate cretonne upon the walls.

"I call this the 'girls' chamber," said Lady Lyneston. "I don't fancy they appreciate majestic old apartments, which look as though a dozen ghosts may tenant them at night. What do you say, Adela?"

"I am not afraid of the ghosts," she answered, with a smile, "and this room is too utterly charming, but I am very conservative. I should like the old rooms to be kept as they are; it would seem sacrilege to alter them."

"You would have won Lord Lyneston's heart by such a speech," said Rosamond, warmly. Then after a pause, she took her by both hands, and looked into her face. "Adela, if Lord Lyneston had known that his nephew loved a girl like you, who would have cherished the old place, and followed out his wishes, I doubt very much whether he would ever have married," she said, earnestly.

"Who said his nephew loved me?" asked Adela, her voice shaking with agitation. "I have never told you so, Rosamond."

"No, but he has."

"He! when?" she gasped.

"Nearly a month ago, when he first arrived in England. He came down to try and prevent my marrying Reginald, being under some misimpression that he had behaved badly to you."

"How very unfortunate!" said the girl.

"Not at all; when they met he found he had made a mistake. By the by, Adela, who was the gentleman whom he mistook for Lord Carruthers?"

Poor Adela covered her face with her hands, and when she removed them she was very white.

"Rosamond, what did he tell you?" she asked, with sudden calmness. "I cannot lose your good opinion."

"He told me that you and he were en-

gaged, and that he loved you dearly, and believed in your affection for him, but that you held clandestine meetings with another, whom he supposed to be Lord Carruthers; that he had heard words of love between you, and had seen him give you love letters."

"Did you *believe* this of me, Rosamond?" she asked with feeling.

"No, Adela! Both Reginald and I feel sure you can give some explanation, however black it looked against you."

"Thanks," she said, heartily pressing her hand.

Then again she flushed.

"Does Lord Carruthers know all that?"

"Yes; I told him."

"And what did he say?"

"He told me to ask you for the truth, Adela."

"You shall have it," she answered, with feeling, "because you trusted me. It was Horace Lake. You know we have been friends from childhood, but perhaps you do not know that for a long time his love for Lilian Freemantle was a prohibited thing."

"Yes, I knew that too; she told me what an angel you had been to her in her trouble."

"She did not tell you all I suffered for her sake," replied Adela, with a sad smile, "for she did not know it herself! I never told her why Cecil and I parted."

"Why was it, dear?"

"I used to do Mercury for them, and convey their love letters, and Cecil surprised Horace and me together, and Horace dropped a part of one of his letters to Lilian, and Cecil picked it up, and naturally it seemed to him to have been written to me."

"Did you not tell him that it was not?"

"Yes; I asked him to trust me, and he couldn't. He would not be satisfied without an explanation of everything, which I could not give him, for of course I could not betray Lilian's confidence; and, Rosamond, it seems as if fate were against me. We met again at Mentone, and Horace was with me; and only a few days since we met once more at my father's grave, and Horace was there too, for he had carried down my flowers."

"Well, dear, you *may* meet again, and if so, you surely will tell him the truth; it cannot hurt Lilian now."

"Gladly would I if he were to ask me; but I could not volunteer such information. It would be like asking him to come back to me."

"And suppose you did ask him? He loves you!"

"It is very easy to say that, Rose; but put yourself in my place. If Lord Carruthers had misjudged and mistrusted you, would you do it?"

"I am afraid I shouldn't," she confessed, "but I should be very miserable."

"So have I been, Heaven knows!"

"Poor girl! Well, there is nothing so soothing as a cup of tea. Come into my boudoir, and we will finish our talk."

Lord Carruthers joined them later, and a friendly greeting took place between them. Then they parted to dress for dinner.

Adela looked very beautiful as she entered the drawing-room, with her half-cut dress-body of black craps and white lace, in starting relief against her fair neck, without an ornament of any sort, save a bunch of scarlet mountain ash-berries, which the Countess had pinned upon her left shoulder.

Lady Lyneston was sitting upon the sofa in earnest conversation with Cecil Egerton, and Adela had advanced far into the apartment before she noticed who her companion was.

When she did so she stopped, and involuntarily pressed her hand against her heart to still its wild pulsation, and would have fled but for the Countess's detaining voice.

"I am glad to bring old friends together," she said, in her pleasant, easy way. "You have not met for some time," she asserted.

"Pardon me, Miss Thorndyke and I have met very lately."

"Of course. How stupid I am! Why you told me only this afternoon that you and Cecil met at your father's grave when you and Horace Lake were carrying flowers there!"

Horace Lake!

He remembered the name at once, and how Scamp had talked of him up in the old tree, where they had sat together when she was but a child.

"Horace Lake!" he repeated, with a strange look. "I had certainly seen the young man before, but I was unaware who he was."

"The young man!" laughed the Countess. "Why, Cecil, one would think he had come down to measure you for a new coat, to hear your scornful accents. Horace Lake is a fine young fellow, and thoroughly nice, and more—he is as true as steel. Did you ever meet Lilian Freemantle? Well, he has been engaged to her ever since they were boy and girl together, and his constancy was wonderful, through the roughest weather; for her stern parent would not let her see him or speak to him. But dear Adela stood by them through thick and thin; and even managed at last to wheedle Sir Richard, who was said to be adamant, into forgiving her, and permitting her engagement."

"When are they going to be married, Adela?"

"In the spring," she answered, in a low voice.

"Well, you can tell Colonel Egerton the rest, dear, for I must ask you to excuse me one moment. My son won't sleep unless I go and kiss him before dinner," and Lady Lyneston was across the room and out of the door before either of them could stop her.

"Adela, is this all true?" asked Cecil Egerton, standing before her, and looking full into her wonderful steadfast eyes.

"It is all true," she answered, meeting his gaze fully.

"Then, in Heaven's name, why have we been all these weary years apart?" he cried, passionately.

"Because you had no faith in me," she replied, with quivering lips; "and if the years have been weary ones to you they have been equally so to me, Cecil."

"Adela, why did you not tell me?" he continued, with feeling. "See how our lives have been wasted and spoilt."

"I could not tell you. I could not betray the confidence of others. They trusted me, Cecil."

"And I did not!" he exclaimed, bitterly.

"No, you did not."

"Well, I have been punished for my fault. My deepest sorrow now is that you have suffered too, but I have learnt wisdom. I know what you are to me to the full. Darling, I shall not err again. Adela, can you forgive me, and will you take me back?"

Then she stretched out both her hands to him, and he drew her to his breast, and folded her lovingly in his arms.

"We shall never misunderstand each other again, Scamp," he said, softly, as he stooped and kissed her.

"I hope not, Cecil; I could not bear much more, and I fear you will find all the Scamp in me gone—the old name has well-nigh fallen into disuse now."

"It will all come back when you are happy, dearest, and it shall be my pleasure to make you so, believe me."

"I do," she said, gently, looking up at him with a smile.

"Darling, let it be a double wedding! Rosamond would be very pleased, and I could take my wife back with me to Malta."

"No, Cecil, it could not be so soon. I should not like to leave my mother at such short notice. If you want me you must wait a little."

"Darling! do you really love me still?" he asked, earnestly.

"If I had not loved you still, Cecil, should I have 'Twice Chosen' you?" she asked, with

a smile. "Is there not the old leaven of mistrust in your question?"

"Adela, you do not know how I love you," he said, passionately. "It is essential to my happiness to feel that I am the one man in the world for you, and that you could not wed any other."

"Cecil, dear!" she replied, softly, laying her hand upon his, confidingly; "had it been possible that any other could be aught to me, I should have married long ago. I have been sorely tempted, but I could not put aside love for worldly advantage. If I could have forgotten you, and our plighted troth, I should not be free now."

"Thank Heaven that you could not," he murmured, fervently; "but dear one, when will you make me happy?"

"If you will return with me to Winsthorpe we will settle that with mother," she said kindly, and the Countess entered the room with Lord Carruthers.

"Rosamond, how shall I ever thank you?" said Colonel Egerton, going forward to meet her. "I see that you planned this meeting!"

"I did—that is, we did," she laughed, with a bright confiding glance at Lord Carruthers. "We thought it so sad that you and Adela should both be miserable, when you might be so very happy; but we had to go very quietly to work, or we should have scared her away. She had no idea you were here, till you met in this room."

"And now I want her to marry me at once, but she says no."

"Perhaps she wished to prove your faith in her, for the sake of her own future happiness," said Lady Lyneston wickedly.

"She need not be afraid," returned Cecil, "I will never risk losing her again."

"Hear, hear!" laughed the Countess. "Adela, dear, do not forget that."

"I shall not," replied the girl, in a low voice, slipping her hand into that of her friend, "and I am so happy!"

The marriage of Lady Lyneston and Lord Carruthers was, as they had decided, a very quiet one, but at the same time it was a remarkably pretty affair, for the Vicar of her parish had been anxious to do her honour, in return for all the cheerful help she had ever rendered him in his work; and the church was decorated with beautiful white blossoms, and the aisles were laid with crimson cloth, and from the churchyard gate to the altar, little children dressed in white, stood with baskets of flowers, to strew the path of the bride, while her tenantry had marked her way with arches of evergreens and bright bunting.

As a widow she had no bridesmaids; but Adela, for once dressed in grey, held her bouquet and gloves.

The costume of the Countess was simply exquisite. The tenderest hue of silver grey satin, richly worked in silver and seed pearls, with ornaments to match, with tiny ostrich feathers in her hair, fastened in with pins of silver and pearls, and a rare old lace veil upon her head, falling far over her lovely dress behind.

There were no tears at the wedding, and very few invited guests.

The Duke of St. Ives after all gave away the bride, to set Colonel Egerton at liberty to be Lord Carruthers' best man; and the young couple, who, even at their ages had tasted sorrow as well as joy, drove back to Lyneston to the *recherche* breakfast, hand clasped in hand.

Colonel Egerton accompanied Adela to Winsthorpe, and was warmly welcomed by Mrs. Thorndyke as her future son-in-law. She had seen her daughter's mental pain again and again, and longed to alleviate it, and now it was to be a thing of the past.

If one pang of regret shot through her heart at the idea of parting with Adela, and living the rest of her life in solitude, she did not let her know it.

The news of Miss Thorndyke's engagement spread quickly through the neighbourhood, and was heard with vastly different feelings by her friends.

Horace and Lilian learnt the good news with unfeigned pleasure, although the former expressed his wish in confidence to his future wife that it had been to any other man, but he found that Colonel Egerton improved upon acquaintance, and even that faint regret passed away.

Both he and Lilian considered no one good enough for Adela, but they grew to like the man she had chosen.

Sir Richard smiled sadly when they told him.

"I always knew there must be someone," he said. "May she be very, very happy; there is no better girl than Adela Thorndyke," and his mind reverted to that day when he had taken her to see his treasures, and had told her of his love.

Bob Lake was not more than human, and he told himself bitterly that the last ray of hope must now be excluded from his heart, and he determined not to return to Winsthorpe until Adela's wedding was over.

It was settled at last that she and Lilian should be married upon the first day of spring, and Cecil returned meanwhile to take the command of his regiment at Malta, thinking the intervening months an eternity.

They ran by quickly with Adela—she had so much to do preparing her trousseau, and so many things to think about.

The old troubled look had gradually passed away from her beautiful face, and she was daily growing more like the Scamp of yore.

March came round again, and with it the wedding-day of both Lilian and Adela.

For many weeks Sir Richard and Mr. Lake had held long and earnest consultations, which evidently had afforded the man of law satisfaction, and on the eve of the wedding day Horace and Lilian were to sign the marriage settlements, Mrs. Thorndyke and Adela being invited to be present as witnesses.

That evening was never forgotten by any of the party assembled.

"Lilian," said her father, with feeling, "I hope the arrangements which I have made, and which Mr. Lake has carried out for me, will meet with your approval, and that they will be for the happiness of both you and Horace. As for you," he continued, giving his future son-in-law a sharp slap on the back, "I have no son of my own, so you must be one to me. I can't think of your running away with Lilian for longer than the honeymoon. Your future name, my boy, will be Horace Lake Freemantle, and if interest can get the old title conferred upon you at my death, it shall be done; otherwise it will lapse at my demise, as there are no male Freemantles left—I have outlived my race."

For the rest I have divided my property now, so that I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have made others happier. For Lilian and Adela, my real daughter, and my daughter in affection, I have drawn out deeds of gifts for thirty thousand pounds each, to render them independent of their husbands," he added, pinching Lilian's cheek.

"Five thousand I have given to Mrs. Thorndyke, to help her keep up the old Rectory, and thirty thousand to Master Horace, to render him independent of his wife and me, upon the understanding that he takes my name as I have before said, and makes his home with me at Marsden Hall."

"Oh! father, how generous you are!" cried Lilian; "but why rob yourself for us like this?"

"My dear, I have never lived up to my income; it has been accumulating for years. You may as well have the money; I have not encroached upon the estate. That will be the property of Horace and yourself at my death, and strictly entailed upon your heirs, male and female, if you are blessed with them; if not, you can make a museum of the old place, and

a park for the people; but I hope the generations of Freemantles may yet reside here. And now I don't think I have any more to say, except that I wish you all much happiness," and he looked from Lilian to Horace, and then let his eyes rest with a kindly light upon Adela Thorndyke, who advanced with tears in her own, and clasped his hand wordlessly, while Mrs. Thorndyke took possession of his other hand, and thanked him with much emotion for his kindness to her and to her child.

"Sir Richard," said Horace, after a pause, "you have not taken the wind out of my sails, but you have filled them so suddenly with fortune's best breezes that you have fairly overturned my powers of speech. I am proud indeed to bear your time-honoured name, and it shall be my earnest endeavour never to tarnish it. Lilian will, I know, rejoice to remain in her old home. It was, I think, her one trial in marrying me that she must leave her and Marsden Hall. For myself, it is dear to me for her sake and yours, who have been so good to me; and, lastly, thank you for your handsome gift. Independence is pleasant to all men, and to most women. I thank you heartily for all you have so generously done for us both; the more so as I expected nothing from you, for you told me plainly that those were the terms of my acceptance as Lilian's suitor."

"I never meant it, my boy; my wish was to prove the disinterestedness of your affection," laughed the Baronet; "so we will shake hands upon the contract."

The following morning Sir Richard tapped early at his daughter's door.

"Are you up, Lilian?" he asked.

"Yes, papa, up and dressed, and alone. Won't you come in?"

"No, dear; I want you to come with me," and he led her to the oratory, and opened the door.

"We must share everything from henceforth, darling," he said. "I have had a second key made for you; it is my wedding present, Lilian. You will from now, I hope, be able to realize what your mother was to me, by the light of your own love for your husband. This is your mother's picture in life, and her effigy in death, my child! They have been my best-loved companions. Visit them now when you like—let them be yours too," and kissing her fondly he left her alone with her mother's likeness.

Tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

"How very, very lovely!" she murmured. "Oh! mother, if you had only lived! What have I lost in you!"

Half-an-hour later she returned to her bedroom, pale, but peaceful and quiet.

The church bells rang out.

It was a gala for the whole parish, and the bishop of the diocese was to marry the two couples, three of whom were prime favourites in the neighbouring country side.

The girls were to be dressed alike, in rich white satin, trimmed with rare old Spanish point, with veils to match, with real orange blossoms, and myrtle flowers.

The two carriages containing the brides drove up to the church simultaneously; and as the two girls walked up the path together, one upon her father's arm, and the other upon her mother's, there was a burst of admiration from the rustic crowd; and it was impossible to say which looked the most beautiful; and not one of the twelve bridesmaids, who stood six on either side, and fell in two and two behind them, as they passed on, could compete with either for the palm of beauty.

The organ pealed out as they entered the church, and on either side the steps leading to the altar stood the two bridegrooms awaiting them—handsome, distinguished-looking men, both of them.

A murmur ran through the church as they stood side by side.

The words were spoken which were to insure peace or misery to four lives, and they

walked to the vestry amid outstretched hands, and a buzz of congratulations.

Then back down the aisle, with their path strewed with flowers, to the soul-stirring strain of the Wedding March, and home to Marsden Hall to breakfast.

Everyone was welcome to the Hall upon the occasion who liked to come.

It was a red-letter day to rich and poor, and good cheer was provided in Royal style.

Two carriages stood waiting at the door soon after, and married life had really begun for Adela and Lilian, as they passed out into the uncertain future, each with her chosen mate, with every prospect of happiness before her.

Six weeks later, Horace and Lilian were receiving their visitors at Marsden Hall, and Adela the adulation of the officers of her husband's regiment at Malta.

The following Christmas a strange and unlooked-for change came.

Lady Carruthers had become the mother of another little boy, and when he was but a few days' old, her bonnie blue-eyed son died suddenly of croup; and was buried long before she was allowed to hear the sad truth.

Thus Lyneston passed away from her, and became the property of Colonel Egerton, who was Colonel Egerton no longer, but Lord Lyneston of Lyneston.

And Lord Carruthers took his wife to Warminster Towers as soon as she was strong enough to travel, tender as a woman to her in her sorrow.

The loss of the little Viscount was a terrible blow to Lady Carruthers; but with her husband's arm about her waist, and her baby's plump arms round her neck, she soon learned to be happy again.

[THE END.]

**HOMES.**—Homes are like harps, of which one is finely carven and bright with gilding, but ill-tuned, and jarring the air with its discords, while another is old and plain and worn, but from its chords float strains that are a feast of music.

**AFTERNOON WEDDINGS.**—The majority of weddings in this country this year have been followed merely by a reception in place of the breakfast. Still, it must be admitted that very aristocratic families cling to the latter time-worn custom, and it is also pretty generally retained in the country, where visitors from a distance stand in need of something a little more substantial than sandwiches, cakes, biscuits, fruit, ices, tea and coffee. The sandwiches, of five or six kinds, are the only solides now served, and when this is the case the buffet totally displaces the table. Probably the new style suits the pockets of hosts with a large circle of friends, as the cost per head is less than one half; and it also gets rid of the awkward question of selection in issuing invitations, as no limit need be imposed. But, nevertheless, it is remarked that the institution, for such it bids fair to become, is not quite so popular with guests as the wedding breakfasts proper. At a reception, usually held between three and four in the afternoon, there are no speeches, which is perhaps, not to be regretted; but an effort has been made to preserve the ceremony of cutting the cake by the bride; and for the provocation of mirth, the cosaque or cracker still survives. Champagne and sherry are also to be had. Flowers there are in abundance, and it may be worth mentioning, that the profusely decorated cake is now a thing of the past. The hideous chalk ornaments which used to be religiously kept under glass in the drawing-rooms of newly-married couples, as a memento, have been condemned as unnatural and inartistic; and instead, real blossoms of pure white are now trailed over the tiers of frosted cake, greatly contributing to a pretty and tasteful result, as opposed to the former ghastly effect.

**A NATURAL LAW.**—It is shown by experiments that a cannon-ball or any heavy substance will sink to the bottom of the ocean as fast as gravity will carry it through the water—that is, no matter how great the pressure is at great depths from the superincumbent mass of water, the specific gravity of the water is but little greater than at the surface. Under these circumstances it follows, as a natural law or result, that all substances, as stone, sand, mud, clay, shells, &c., exist at great depths with but little variation, except from the effects of decreased light.

**A CURIOUS COLLECTION.**—A carpet merchant of Vienna has a curious collection of ancient woollen and linen cloths, including more than three hundred specimens. Many of them have been taken from tombs, and are stretched on folios of cardboard to preserve them. Some of the fragments are only a foot square, but the larger ones make up an entire Roman toga, which is said to be the only one in the world. There are a great many embroidered dresses and a deal of knitting and crewel-work. Double chain stitch seems to have been as familiar to the Egyptian seamstresses sewing with bone needles as it is to modern women. There are some very quaint and unusual designs in the old collection of cloths, but there are also some very common things. It is curious to find that the common blue check pattern of our dusters and workhouse aprons was in general use among the Egyptians more than a thousand years ago.

**NOT AN EVIDENCE OF HEALTH.**—Stoutness is not an evidence of health, and few people covet largely increased avoiduposis. "You're getting fat," is a common form of greeting intended to be complimentary; but if it be true it is seldom so regarded. Stout persons, particularly women, are very sensitive on the point, and would be glad to forget it, not to be continually reminded of it. They are but too well aware of the inconvenience, awkwardness and discomfort of the condition to be pleased by any reference thereto. Not only this, any excess of flesh is a sign of disease, if not disease itself. Stoutness, though not so called, is unquestionably a misfortune. Everybody that is stout wishes to be otherwise, and many that are stout are trying various ways to reduce themselves. A man of ordinary height and build who weighs two hundred pounds generally weighs more than he ought to, and is made conscious of it in divers ways. There are exceptions; but such is the rule.

**TRAINING NURSES.**—In every city schools for the training of nurses are organized; and the value of such skilled help is being more and more appreciated by the physician, who, in his busy professional life, cannot make the observations as to the temperature, pulse and respiration of his patient as often as he would like, or as the welfare of the patient demands. In all these methods nurses are now trained, and their services are well-nigh indispensable. A trained nurse is, however, an expensive luxury, a heavy fee being usually paid them; so that only the rich can enjoy their educated aid. What is greatly needed in our cities is an organization which will supply such succour to the poor, by whom such services are in reality more needed than by the rich. Every physician whose practice has taken him into tenement houses has felt the great need of some one to nurse his patients; when, through ignorance or poverty, neither they nor their friends can do anything to aid him. In Philadelphia (U.S.), a district nurse society has been formed for the care of the sick poor who cannot be sent to the hospital. A trained nurse is provided by this society to visit and attend the sick. Bed linen and other necessaries are also furnished.

For their services a charge of twopence-halfpenny a day is made, except when the patient or his relatives cannot afford to pay anything, in which case everything is furnished without recompense. The motive which underlies this system is an admirable one, and we shall watch the working of the plan with great interest.

## IVY'S PERIL.

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### CHAPTER VII.

MEANWHILE the good ship *Arethusa* pushed its voyage prosperously across the ocean just as blithely as though the presence of two of the saloon passengers had not been desired very earnestly at home.

Sir John and Lady Fortescue thoroughly enjoyed their trip. The Baronet was not too old to take a keen interest in new sights, while his wife, being twenty years his junior, entered into all the little diversions got up to amuse the hours of the long voyage with the utmost delight.

Perhaps no happier circumstances under which to travel could have been imagined than that of this genial pair.

They were not going to seek their fortunes, consequently they had no fears of what might meet them at their destination. They had had no very painful partings, since Ivy Carew, who was dearest to both after each other, would be well cared for in their absence; besides, as the young lady was shortly to leave them altogether for a husband's roof five months' separation from her was only a foretaste of what they must expect in the future.

Both Sir John and his wife decided they had made a great mistake in not travelling before. Truth to say, the Baronet's objection to foreign cooking and rooted ignorance of any language but his own had always prevented them from even crossing the Channel.

With a lady's maid and valet to look after their creature comforts, with the certainty that when they reached Sydney their banker would have made such arrangements with his agents there that they could draw cheques as easily as though they were at home, Sir John and Lady Fortescue may be forgiven, perhaps, if they declared a voyage to the Antipodes to be a "mere nothing," and wondered how people could possibly look on it as a trying or hazardous expedition.

They made plenty of friends on the way out. Before this we have said neither of the kindly pair made unpleasant inquiries about the ancestors of their acquaintances, so that those they met were qualified by speech and manner to rank as of gentle blood.

Lady Fortescue and her husband never troubled themselves to examine into the precise quality of the blood itself. They had a rare knack of making the best of people, and, perhaps, in all their lives had never found this plan fail.

Certainly they had got well on to middle age without making an enemy, unless we except the man who had destroyed their sister's peace, and made them tremble for her child's; but then, though Sir John and his wife had had hated Ivy's stepfather with all the force their generous hearts were capable of, they had never seen him, or he them, so that even this foe could hardly be said to have been of their making.

It was not wonderful, perhaps, that the object of such people as Ivy's relations in going to Australia at their time of life should create considerable curiosity.

No one put the question "Why?" in point-blank form, but so many hinted at it that Sir John, who hated mystery, openly announced he was going to Sydney to look after the Delonda gold mines.

As a rule, after this statement, folks were satisfied; but there was one gentleman among the passengers who paid no attention to Sir John's brilliant account of the speculation in question, and who, indeed, mostly strolled out of hearing when the Baronet was descanting on the advantage to be gained by investments in his pet scheme.

Mr. Giles Brandon was a man of forty turned, a cool, shrewd, practical fellow, reported to have made a fortune in sheep-farming, and now to be making another in wool. English by birth, and with a university

training, whose polish nearly twenty years at the Antipodes had failed to rub off.

He had just been "home" on a six months' trip to leave his girls at an English school, and he was returning to his "place" near Sydney a little graver and more serious than usual, for his wife had been dead some years, his eldest daughter was a bride, and those bright faces he had left behind him in England were the only ones left to make him happy for him.

He struck up a great intimacy with the Fortescues, and until Sir John revealed his business at Sydney had been continually in their company. After that he seemed to hold aloof.

"Have we offended you in any way, Mr. Brandon?" asked Lady Fortescue, one evening, when she was sitting on deck watching for the Southern Cross, and Sir John had left her for a few minutes to smoke a cigar with a congenial spirit. "You hardly come near us now."

"You have not offended me in the least," was the prompt reply.

"But your whole manner seems changed," "I have been perplexed with doubts."

"About us?"

"Partly. Lady Fortescue, if you saw a person in great danger, and yet knew they would laugh your warning to scorn, what would you do?—risk offending them and speak your word of caution, or leave them in their blind confidence?"

Lady Fortescue looked troubled.

"I don't know."

"Am I right in thinking your husband a man of strong prejudices?"

"I am afraid so, Mr. Brandon," and she looked at him with her soft true eyes full of a great anxiety. "I think I understand a little of what you mean. You want to warn my husband about the Delonda Gold Mines."

"And if I did?"

"It would be utterly useless. John prides himself on his business talents."

"May I talk to you a little about it?"

"I wish you would."

"You will not consider me intrusive?"

"Oh no! and she put her hand in his. "To be frank with you, I have not quite liked the matter myself. Perhaps if you would explain things to me I could drop a word of caution to my husband, but I know he would not take it from a stranger."

"Do you know how much Sir John has invested in the speculation?"

"I do not know how much money he has actually paid, but if it were to fail we might lose ten thousand pounds."

"Ten thousands pounds!"

"But Sir John has a large income, and we have no claims on us; the money comes from his savings. So far as we are concerned, we should not feel its loss, but I have dreaded lately—"

"You can trust me," put in Giles Brandon simply. "A man I know in Sydney burnt his fingers pretty freely over these mines before the Company was started."

"I have feared, seeing Sir John's name on the prospectus, it might lead others to invest who could not afford to lose."

"It is my belief, Lady Fortescue, when we get to Sydney, we shall find the bubble has burst, and the company smashed. It is started by a man I have no faith in."

"I thought it was started by Mr. White, the great millionaire?"

Brandon opened his eyes.

"He made a lot of money two years ago, but he has never been a millionaire; it amused me very much when I was in London to see how thoroughly he was believed in."

"Do you know him?"

"I have known him on and off for years. I suppose he has visited most large countries and now and again he has turned up in our part of the world."

"You don't like him?"

"Have I said I do not?"

"You implied it."

"My liking matters little. I have no cause to disparage the fellow. I never lost a shilling through him."

Lady Fortescue grew troubled.

"Do you think him a bad man?"

"My dear lady, why ask such a question? I fancy he has done Sir John the kindness of showing him how to get rid of ten thousand pounds, but you say that is a trifle to a man in your husband's position."

"But we have left Ivy with him, Mr. Brandon; you must tell me the truth. Is my child in any danger?"

In a very few words she explained how her niece had happened to be left in Mrs. Austin's charge. Giles Brandon listened anxiously; there was much in the story puzzled him, a great deal that he could not fathom, but, on the whole, he took very much the view William Campbell had pressed on Mr. Beresford.

Miss Carew being an heiress, and George White having no interest whatever in injuring her, she was as safe under his roof as she would have been under her own uncle's.

"You haven't the slightest cause for alarm.

If your niece were of age, he might draw her into some dangerous speculations; if she were free to listen to him he might possibly propose to her, for I know he requires money to help on his speculations; but as things are Miss Carew is in no danger. A minor's money cannot be speculated with by one who is in no way her guardian, and a betrothed young lady with her fiancé within hail, there's no danger of yielding to the persuasions of a suitor old enough to be her father. It is possible if he were very down in his luck some years hence he might claim a little help from your niece on the score of her present intimacy with him; but, after all, that is the merest contingency."

"You have made me quite easy, but when you first spoke about Mr. White I perfectly trembled for Ivy."

"It seems strange—pardon me—to have left her in a stranger's care."

"They were not strangers; we had grown very intimate, and Mrs. Austin took a great interest in Ivy, because long ago she had known her mother."

"But who is Mrs. Austin?"

"Mr. Brandon, you can't have been listening to me. Mrs. Austin is the millionaire's sister. Did you never meet her in Australia?"

"I never visited White," said Giles, shortly. "Is this Mrs. Austin a widow?"

"Yes. I fancy her husband was enormously rich, and that as soon as his property came to her she devoted a large slice of it to helping her brother. They are a most devoted couple, it is rare to see brother and sister so warmly attached."

"Very rare. Then Miss Carew is Mrs. Austin's guest?"

"Yes."

Giles Brandon looked as if he did not like the answer which was stranger; since, as he professed ignorance of Mrs. Austin, he could hardly know anything to her discredit. Still the fact remains, though he had no acquaintance with the widow, and had heard of Ivy Carew that evening for the first time, he certainly seemed troubled to think that the two were guest and hostess.

"I wish you would come and stay with me, Lady Fortescue," he said, abruptly. "I have a house in one of the best parts of Sydney; and though I have no lady living with me to do the honours of it, my daughter, Mrs. Mortimer, lives two streets off, and if I were to her from Melbourne I know she will have everything in readiness for your reception. I know Sir John has been thinking of an hotel, but I hope you will induce him to change his mind. Let me show you Australian hospitality!"

Lady Fortescue thanked him. She was a very simple woman, but she could not help seeing there was an earnestness in his manner not consistent with a mere ordinary invitation.

"It is most kind of you to wish it, but—" here she hesitated—"haven't you some reason for it? Are you afraid people will be very bitter

against Sir John on account of his connection with the Delonda Mines?"

"I am not afraid of that; but you are right in thinking I had a motive even beyond the pleasure of your society. I cannot tell you what it is, Lady Fortescue. Can you trust me sufficiently to urge your husband to become my guest without hearing more?"

"I think so. I seem to feel your reason is an urgent one."

"Indeed it is."

"And that you mean only kindness to me by keeping it secret."

"It is merely a perhaps needless fear of mine. Your coming to my house will free you from the danger, even if it exists; and should it be a mere myth of my imagination, the consequences of my precaution will only have given me two very valued guests, and made you exchange an hotel for hospitality, if not equal to what you might meet with in England, at least hearty and sincere."

"I shall do my utmost to persuade Sir John to come to you, but we should have to leave you soon."

"And why? Not before your business at the Antipodes is accomplished, I hope?"

"I do not think you have heard the whole of our business!" said Lady Fortescue, who was a woman to give entire trust or none at all. "My husband's great object in coming to Sydney is to trace out some cousins; but for this I believe he would have left the Delonda gold mines to take care of themselves."

Mr. Brandon looked as though a ray of light had broken upon him.

"I am delighted to hear it. I feared to undertake a voyage to the Antipodes on their account, his interest in the gold mines must be very powerful."

"There is something rather sad in the other part of our business," said Lady Fortescue, quietly; "and so I do not wonder that my husband has not cared to speak of it. We are, as I have told you, rich. My husband's estate is strictly entailed, and in all the breadth of England he has none to claim kin with him. You will think us very simple, but it is only quite lately we have troubled to think who was to come after us. Ivy Carew has been our adopted child so many years I was foolish enough to think she would be my husband's heiress; but she has not a drop of his blood in her veins, and so—"

Brandon understood the sadness of the childless wife. He felt warmly interested, and more anxious than ever to have the Fortescues for his guests.

He had had some experience, but never in his life had he met a couple so genuinely trustful, and open to deception.

It seemed to him Sir John was the very man to put an advertisement in the paper, headed "Wanted, an heir," and to believe implicitly in the claims of all who answered the advertisement, so that he would probably require a small ship all to himself on his return voyage to accommodate not only all the pretenders to "kinship," but all the aspirants, whose connection was close enough for them to claim kindness at his hands.

"I suppose you have seen the young man?" suggested Giles.

"Oh, no! And he is not young, Mr. Brandon. He said himself he was nearly seventy."

Giles Brandon started.

"Then he must be much older than Sir John?"

"But how did you hear of this venerable heir? Did he write to you? Are you certain of his identity?"

Lady Fortescue shook her head despondingly.

"How can we be certain when we have never seen him. I will tell you all about it, Mr. Brandon, and then perhaps you will understand."

"It was in November, and we had not thought much about it. John told me when Ivy was married he had better try and trace out his next of kin, but I did not much care, for it seemed to me looking for his successor made my husband's death seem nearer, when one morning there was a letter from

Alexander Fortescue, saying he stood next in succession, but as he was nearly seventy he never expected to come into the property. Still he wanted to know what provision we would make for his son John, who was my husband's undoubted heir."

"And what relation would the said John bear to your husband?"

"John's great uncles emigrated over seventy years ago. Then the old Alexander who wrote us his eldest son, and the John, for whom we are expected to provide, his grandson. I never was good at tracing relationships, but I imagine John would be my husband's second cousin."

"I hope you will be very careful, Lady Fortescue, and urge Sir John to employ the strictest inquiry."

"But why?"

"My good lady, there are hundreds of needy men in Sydney—and I fancy in most other parts of the world—who would use a great deal of skill—ays, and give a great deal of time and trouble, if they could succeed in getting themselves recognized as next heir to the Fortescue estates."

"How dreadful!"

"Don't be alarmed; you only want a little caution. My son-in-law Mortimer, is a very clever lawyer. I'll give him a hint not to let Sir John be imposed upon."

Lady Fortescue smiled.

"I never thought of it before; but, of course, there's a horrid risk. Anyone might pretend to be descended from Alexander Fortescue, and we should be none the wiser."

Brandon tried to cheer her.

"I don't think it is as bad as that. You've only got to exercise a proportionate of caution. I fancy, Lady Fortescue, it will be a great relief to you when you find yourself home again. How long do you propose to stay in Sydney?"

"Not long. Ivy is to be married in June or July, and I have to do a great deal of shopping for her. I quite hope to be in England by the end of April."

"We are due in Sydney about the twentieth of January. To carry out your wishes you ought to leave in the middle of March. Two months will not give you long to find Sir John's cousin, and see the beauties of Australia."

Lady Fortescue laughed.

"I think the beauties of Australia will have to wait. And, I don't imagine, Alexander Fortescue will be difficult to find; you know we have his address."

"Indeed!"

"Of course; it was in his letter."

"To be sure. Might I ask for it? I know Sydney so well that I think I am familiar with all the chief streets."

"It is Horton Ranch."

"Horton Ranch?"

"Yes," repeated Lady Fortescue, a little surprised at his amazement. "It perplexed us very much what Ranch stood for, but Mr. White told us it was Australian for terrace. I should have thought you would have known the idiom."

He did not apologize for his ignorance.

"I know Horton Ranch well; but it is not the address of a place. Horton Ranch, Lady Fortescue, is a very second-rate lawyer. His name was probably put on the letter so that the reply should be sent to his office if your relations were away."

"But there was a number!" persisted Lady Fortescue. "No. 47, Horton Ranch, I think it was."

"Sir John's correspondent was doubtless pressed for space, and put two lines of the address into one. It should have read—

"(No. 47),

"Mr. Horton Ranch,

"Sydney."

"And why?"

"In a business like Mr. Ranch's it is a very usual thing to have as many as a hundred clients who, having no fixed address, receive the whole of their correspondence through an agent. Mr. Ranch has a row of pigeon-holes,

duly labelled with numbers, and these are let out at so much a month. No. 47 is evidently the property of the Fortescues; their correspondence is placed there on its arrival, and they, possessing a key to the small glass door in front of the compartment, can at once possess themselves of the contents."

"How strange!"

"It makes the search a little more difficult. In Sir John's place, I should simply write to No. 47 on arriving in Sydney, declaring myself anxious to make the acquaintance of my correspondent."

Women have a great deal of influence over the men they love, and Lady Fortescue easily induced Sir John to accept Mr. Brandon's hospitality.

An interesting domestic event, which made Mr. Brandon a grandfather at the early age of forty-four, prevented Mrs. Mortimer from personally welcoming the English guests; but all preparations for their comfort had been made, and when the husband and wife saw the handsome rooms allotted to them, furnished with every essential to comfort, and opening on to the broad verandah which ran round three sides of the house, they both declared that in spite of the novel sensation of feeling fatigued in January, they were quite at home.

Inquiries soon showed that Mr. White had gone a few hundred miles up-country on business connected with the Diamond mines. Sir John had a vague idea he ought to follow him, but his wife and Mr. Brandon both persuaded him to give it up, and wait tranquilly until such time as it was possible to see the millionaire's representative in Sydney.

"The fact is," Mr. Brandon warned Lady Fortescue, "the whole thing is on the point of bursting. The agent is most likely in hiding. If Sir John interferes now he may be persuaded to throw good money after bad, and to make himself more a loser by this speculation. He had far better stay here, and let things take their course."

"But, Mr. White!" suggested Lady Fortescue, "was a little anxious that her husband's reputation for cleverness should not suffer; 'won't he think it very strange Sir John should not take steps?'"

"I assure you, George White, in your husband's place would do just the same," was the one-syllable reply.

They spent a week very pleasantly in the colonist's social home. Then Sir John began to grow anxious that no answer had arrived from "No. 47," and at Mr. Brandon's suggestion went to make personal inquiries in the office.

The Baronet's card procured him the honour of an interview with Horton Ranch, to whom he took an unmitigated dislike. There are few persons more distasteful to a man particular about his associates than what is termed in England a "shady lawyer"—to those men who contrive just not to be struck off the rolls, but to go as near that calamity as possible, and yet to escape it. There exists a prejudice not altogether unfounded, since, though their clients are mostly of the poorest classes, they themselves grow rich with amazing rapidity.

Horton Ranch was a fair example of this. No one in Sydney had a good opinion of him, and he was known to have had two or three very narrow escapes from appearing in a law court in quite another from his official capacity; yet every one admitted he was clever, and despite the shabby little office, and his shabbier attire, most people believed he was getting rich. He was a little man, with a head like a bulldog, and eyes that could see, metaphorically, through a stone wall. He took in Sir John's measure with one glance, and then wished the stalwart colonist had not been at his elbow.

Alone in the hands of Horton Ranch, Sir John would have been as docile as a piece of wax under the power of the modeller. He listened in respectful silence, turned up a big book of reference, and discovered that in the month of September—when the letter

which determined Sir John's voyage was dated—No. 47 was let to an old man of the name of Foster.

"That's no use," said the Baronet, dejectedly.

"Pardon me," returned Mr. Ranch, blandly. "It is of the greatest use. People out here are not above disguising their name when they're unfortunate. I know this Foster well. He has been through experiences and extremities to whose heck he could never have dragged the name of Fortescue."

"Is he alive now?"

"He was two weeks ago. He hasn't been up since we had that letter of yours. He lives twelve miles out, and it's a stiff walk for a man of seventy. It's old Sandy Foster you want; I can find him for you to-morrow."

"Old Sandy Foster!" It was not a respectful way of speaking of the heir of the Fortescues, the future master of St. Aran's. Sir John winced, and felt sensible of two emotions—thankfulness his wife did not hear the epithet, and a devout hope that John might be more promising than his father. A consultation fee, and Mr. Ranch was quite willing to tell them all he knew of the Foster family.

They came there years and years before—in fact, when he was a mere boy. Old Sandy Foster was then perhaps twenty, and very clever as an accountant. He had some children then, and more since. Mr. Ranch believed there were nine in all; they were grown up and scattered; now, except the eldest son, who lived near his father, Sandy was given to drink, and had long since lost all chance of employment. John kept a store, and helped the old man; but he had too large a family to make it pay.

Sir John groaned. It was not an inviting picture to receive of his relations.

"You have no proof," said Mr. Brandon, encouragingly. "This man may no more be Alexander Fortescue than I am."

"I shouldn't wonder if he was though," commented Mr. Ranch, "I always knew Old Sandy was of decent stock, and he boasted all his days that his father came from some grand place in England, and there was a title in the family. He used to say a taste for wine was the only aristocratic taste the poor old fellow had inherited."

Pleasant news, very. Sir John looked at Brandon in mute despair. Giles rushed to the resuscitation.

"What proofs did Mr. Foster give of his alleged aristocratic descent?"

"Well, I don't know that you could call them proofs," said Horton Ranch, meditatively. "He's got two miniatures painted on ivory that he sets a heap by, and wouldn't sell for their weight in gold, and one's a lady in court dress, with powdered hair; and the other some old swell with a grand uniform. He calls them his ancestors. Then there's a ring with a crest on it, he says is an heirloom, and lots of papers. I've heard him say myself that he wouldn't take a hundred pounds for his shabby old pocket-book, because the things in it could make his fortune. I can't say," pursued Mr. Ranch, passing his fingers through his scanty hair, "that I paid much attention to the old boy's ramblings. I used to think they were just a drunkard's babblings, but I must say it begins to look as if Old Sandy had had something to boast of after all."

Sir John insisted on walking home.

Mr. Brandon fancied he was, for the first time in his life, reluctant to meet his wife, and chose his own feet instead of the horses', so as to prolong the journey to the utmost.

"What is to be done?" he asked, leaning as heavily on Brandon's common sense as he was leaning in actual fact upon his arm.

"My dear Sir John, the case is not in the best degree, proved; you may be the victim of an attempted fraud. Don't worry yourself yet."

The Baronet signed.

"You've never seen my home, Brandon. It's the gem of the county, and been in our family since the Crusades. Just think of it belonging



[“I SHOULDN’T LIKE TO HURT THE OLD ‘UN,’ THE YOUNG GENTLEMAN REPLIED; “HE’S A MIGHTY NUISANCE, BUT NEVER DID US ANY HARM.”]

to a drunkard, to a man who’s fallen so low that he’s known as poor Old Sandy!”

“Well, you know,” said Brandon, who saw that more than mere scouting of Sandy’s claims was necessary to cheer Sir John, “you’re a good\* ten years younger than this fellow; you will probably outlive him!”

“Then there’s his son.”

“The son is hard on fifty, and men age soon when they’ve had a drunken father and a hard life. We must hope, Sir John, if these Fosters prove to be really Fortescues, that you will live to a ripe old age, so that the succession comes to Mr. Alexander’s grandson. You might take the lad right away from his surroundings, and bring him up to something better. Any way, don’t worry before you need. Sandy’s got a hard piece of work, to my mind, before he proves himself to be the son of that Alexander Fortescue who came out twenty years ago.”

Sir John was just a little alarmed.

“But my wife!” he said, gloomily; “how on earth am I to tell her?”

“Don’t tell her.”

“I couldn’t keep such a secret from her. Lucy and I are an old-fashioned couple, sir, and we confide in each other.”

“Tell me then. I don’t think it will affect her as it has done you.”

This seemed to Sir John a downright slight to his wife’s feelings.

“I assure you, Brandon, my wife will grieve bitterly over it. She loves St. Arran’s as well as I do.”

Brandon smiled a little wistfully. He was thinking of his own wife, who had loved him much as Lady Fortescue now loved Sir John.

“I fancy,” he said, simply, “when you are called to your last home, Sir John, your wife’s sorrow will be such that it will trouble her little who stands in your place as mistress of St. Arran’s.”

“There is something in that.”

“Meanwhile, don’t rush to the dark side.

Take my advice—don’t let Horton Ranch find Mr. Foster for you.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t like him. My son-in-law, Mortimer, knows a little of pretty nearly everyone. I’ll tell him to set one of his clerks on the track.”

It proved a very easy one, for, calling on Mr. Mortimer that very day they discovered that the humblest person in the office, a boy with freckles and a fiery shock of red hair, was able to give them all needful information concerning the Fosters, since he was old Sandy’s grandson, and John the storekeeper’s son and heir.

He was a sharp youth of fifteen, and declined to give his grandsire’s address until assured by Mr. Mortimer himself that no wrong could come to that worthy relative by the disclosure.

“I shouldn’t like to hurt the old ‘un,” replied the young gentleman, with more affection than respect; “he’s a mighty nuisance, with his bragging and tales of what he’d have if he’d got his rights; but still, he never did us any harm, and mother says he rocks the cradle better than any hired girl. There’s always a cradle in our house.”

Sir John rather liked the speech; but the lad was terribly uncouth, and his education evidently superficial.

His duties being simply to sweep the office, run errands, and answer the door, no very great learning had ever been required of him. And then his hair and his freckles—surely the equal of either had never been seen in all the annals of the St. Arran’s family!

Mr. Brandon had most carefully refrained from addressing Sir John by name, and had enjoined his son-in-law to do the same, so that young Foster had not the slightest idea who the elderly gentleman, who regarded him so intently, could be; but he hardly relished the scrutiny, and was manifestly anxious to return to the outer office and his high stool.

“You can go now, Alick,” said Mr. Mortimer, pleasantly. “We have finished with you.”

“Is his name Alexander?” asked poor Sir John, who was just in the mood to take the slightest incidents as strong confirmation of his fears.

“Alexander F. Foster,” said the youth, with the air of one repeating a lesson. “There are ten of us, and we’ve all got that F. tucked in before the Foster—boys and girls alike. It’s just a fancy of the old ‘un’s; and mother, she don’t mind so long as he drops it down to F, and doesn’t call us by it.”

“What does the F stand for?” asked Sir John, anxiously.

“I most forgot,” returned the youth. “It’s something much too fine for everyday use. I read in the paper the other day that a grand gentleman had come to stay with Mr. Brandon. I don’t recall his name exactly, but it was the same as our F stands for, I know, because I told mother, and she shook her head and said it was just fancy of the old ‘un’s, and not a sensible christened name at all.”

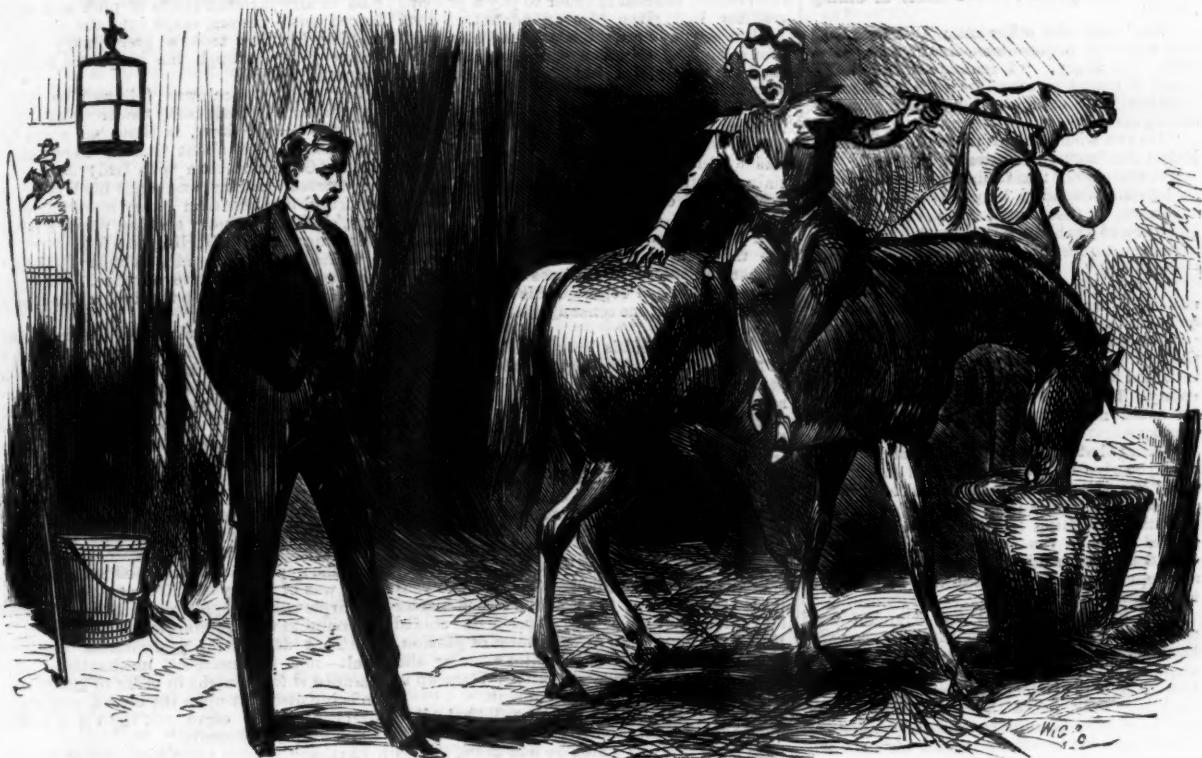
Mr. Mortimer looked at Sir John pityingly when his hopeful office-boy had retired. Entirely in his father-in-law’s confidence, he knew the fears that must be troubling the Baronet.

“You mustn’t despair yet,” he said, kindly. “I know Sandy Foster, or the ‘old ‘un’ as his grandson respectfully terms him; and though he has undoubtedly once occupied a far better position than his family fill now I can’t believe he is the representative of an old English family.”

Sir John groaned.

“Handsome is as handsome does,” he quoted, sadly; “but, oh! I never thought there’d be a Fortescue with such hair and freckles! Hell be the nineteenth baronet, and—my stable-boy is more like a gentleman!”

(To be continued.)



["'VERY FEW PERSONS KNOW,'" SAID CHARLEY, "'THAT RALPH BURLINGTON HAS A DAUGHTER.'"]

NOVELETTE.]

## MARRIED FOR HATE.

—:—

## CHAPTER I.

BURLINGTON'S Royal Circus and Hippodrome had pitched its tent—a very large one, representing a great deal of canvas—at Fairleigh, a dull little country town in Essex.

It was to remain there a week, neither more nor less. Great red and yellow posters had announced this important fact to the inhabitants of Fairleigh for many days past.

The strait-laced section had duly pronounced against the circus as dangerous to morality; one dissenting minister had indeed launched invective at it from his little pepperbox of a pulpit, while the lenient, easy-going folks, always in the majority, had decided to patronise Burlington's, and allow themselves a pleasant evening.

"Just to give the children a treat," of course. They hadn't the least desire to go to the circus on their own account—not they.

Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome was known to be one of the best then travelling throughout the country. All the local magnates had promised to patronise it on the third night of its stay at Fairleigh.

There was a special rehearsal that afternoon, to ensure everyone being well up in his or her part.

Chinese lanterns, flags, evergreens, were disposed about the large canvas building to give it a festive appearance.

The grooms, to appear later on with shining faces and scarlet jackets, were hard at work in their shirt-sleeves under the vigilant superintendence of the circus proprietor, Ralph Burlington.

"What the dickens are you up to there, you fool?" shouted this gentleman, angrily, to the young fellow who was arranging the Chinese

lanterns. "You've hung that just where it's most likely to be knocked down, and fall on the people in the pit. Put it higher up." Then, turning sharply round, "have those hoops been covered with paper yet? Oh, no; of course not. Everything left till the last moment, as usual. Get that net stretched at once, and have fresh sawdust thrown down as soon as the riding is over. I shall be back again in half-an-hour to see that it is done, and done properly."

Kicking the clown's dog, which had got between his legs, out of the way, Ralph Burlington strode from the ring, an ominous frown upon his face, a strong desire to quarrel with somebody uppermost in his mind.

The circus proprietor was a tall, stalwart man of fifty, with a swarthy face, strongly-marked features, keen and rather protuberant dark eyes, a square, massive chin, and straight, dark hair worn rather long—a coarse-natured man, with a powerful will and plenty of executive ability. A man who was polite to his superiors, off-hand civil to his equals, and tyrannical to his inferiors, especially those in his employ.

The latter he bullied incessantly, and worked hard, treating them without the least consideration or kindness, earning in return their cordial hatred.

Everyone connected with the circus detested Ralph Burlington, and would have welcomed any circumstance likely to injure or humiliate him.

Hard, strong, proud, not without mental power of a certain kind, he kept them all at a distance, as it were, maintaining an unassailable position, while controlling the little army of professionals, grooms, and stable-helps in his employ with a severity, and at times a tyranny, that frequently led to revolt.

They deemed him invulnerable, a man without gentler feelings or human weakness of any kind to redeem his cruel nature.

The only thing to be said in his favour was

that he paid good salaries to clever *artistes*, good wages to those lower down in the scale, and who felt the weight of his authority most.

He was in a worse temper than usual to-day, something special having occurred to annoy him.

On the previous night, Sally, one of the performing elephants, had broken loose without being detected, and gone "on the rampage."

Shambling down a country lane she had frightened a woman almost into fits. Going up to a farmhouse she had broken in the window of a room where the farmer and his family were at supper. Not liking the look of the uninvited guest they had promptly fled. Sally, nothing daunted, had introduced her head and trunk through the broken window and promptly cleared the table, afterwards, with *malice prepense*, sweeping all that was breakable off it on to the floor.

Ralph Burlington would have to make good the damage done by this lively Sally, and the knowledge in no wise tended to improve his temper.

As he went out he encountered a young man, one of the professionals, in the act of entering the circus, cigar in mouth. Ralph Burlington's heavy brow lowered; he grasped the riding whip that he carried more firmly, as the other regarded him with a glance of cool defiance.

"You'd better not keep the audience waiting to-night, Mr. Glyndon, as you did a week ago at Duliborough," he said, roughly. "I don't stand any more of that nonsense."

"I was behind time once by a matter of five minutes," replied Glyndon, easily, "and you have not failed to make capital out of the incident, Mr. Burlington."

"It will be to your *interest* not to repeat it," said the circus-master, an angry gleam, a danger light, shining in his dark eyes. "I don't suppose," with a strident, insulting

laugh, "that you are in the habit of dining late?"

"No," said the other man, in a tone that was amused, supercilious, indifferent, anything but angry. "I renounced that habit when I ceased to associate with gentlemen. I follow your example, Mr. Burlington, by dining early."

"Do you wish to insult me, sir?" demanded Ralph Burlington, threateningly.

"Certainly not: last thing in my thoughts," said Arthur Glyndon, languidly elevating his eyebrows. "Insult my employer! I wouldn't be guilty of such an unpardonable act. You asked me a question, and I gave you an answer—that is all."

Ralph Burlington was silent then, and more under his breath. Bullying, and abuse were quite in his line; he might have taken a "double first" in either, but the light sarcasm, the pointed speech in which this young man indulged were beyond him, and irritated him sorely. He was at a disadvantage, because he could not fight Glyndon with his own weapons.

"Mind that you are not late to-night; mind that you give me no cause to find fault with you," he reiterated, as he turned to go. "If you do, you'll repeat it."

Without waiting for an answer, he disappeared beneath the canvas doorway, Arthur Glyndon going inside towards the bearing, where a groom stood holding a beautiful black mare in readiness for him.

Tall, athletic, well set up, Glyndon was accented by the liability of the circus a very handsome man. His dark brown hair fell in short waves over a broad, white forehead. He had clear-cut, aristocratic features, elegant dark blue eyes, and a thick moustache. He could not have been more than thirty, yet the lines round his mouth and under his eyes betokened hard living in the past, while the bitter, reckless tone that pervaded nearly all he said went to prove that he was still reaping in a very plentiful harvest of wild oats, soon in his younger days.

He had joined the circus six months before with a highly-trained performing horse called Lady Jane. Glyndon's clever mare, trained by himself, had become a prominent and popular feature in the entertainment. Ralph Burlington could not afford to send the horse and its owner adrift, much as he hated the latter.

That Arthur Glyndon was no ordinary circus-performer even the groom felt certain. There was about him, betraying itself in voice and bearing, that indefinable air of good breeding which marks the gentleman.

He was invariably courteous to the women connected with the circus, always ready to render them any little friendly service; and they liked him immensely. With the men he was genial and pleasant, while maintaining a strict regard to his own past. On the whole he was a favourite with all save Ralph Burlington. That gentleman hated him, because of his unconscious superiority and good breeding, which seemed like a perpetual rebuke to his own coarseness. Moreover, Glyndon had ventured to resent his bullying, hectoring manner, to give him as good as he sent, only in different terms.

The young man's sarcasm, speeches, his lightly-veiled contempt for his employer, had stung the latter almost to madness, and rendered him more bent upon insulting and ill-treating Glyndon by way of revenge.

"The governor's got his knife into Glyndon," remarked little Jimmy Waters, the clown, one day; "and Glyndon's got a spirit that won't let him stand as much as we do. There'll be a scene between those two, sooner or later worth seeing—you mark my words."

"I hope Glyndon will get the best of it, then, and give that old curmudgeon a sound licking," replied Signor Tito Pianini, otherwise Plain Jack Robinson, whose daring trapeze performance caused a sensation nightly.

Unfortunately thus far Ralph Burlington had got decidedly the best of it. A loan of

ten pounds, solicited in order to pay a pressing creditor, had given him an advantage over Arthur Glyndon ere the latter had been with him a month. Glyndon was too poor to refund the money, for which Lady Jane stood prepared for her.

If he left the circus he must leave his performing horse behind, and himself without the means of obtaining a living. Lady Jane was worth twenty guineas, yet he could not claim her until the pay-day sum was paid.

He stayed on consequently enduring Ralph Burlington's coarse, insulting manner as well as he could, not unfrequently turning the tables upon him, and causing him to appear ridiculous in the eyes of his employer, since his power of repartee, his early training rendered him in one sense at least Burlington's master.

Nevertheless, in his heart, Arthur Glyndon writhed beneath the daily slights and insults dealt out to him, and longed for a day of reckoning to arrive.

That he should have such a blow to his at the mercy of such a coarse brute as Burlington was gall and wormwood to him. Only if he could but raise sufficient money to redeem Lady Jane and quit the circus after settling affairs with its master, and avenging such studied indignity received.

Meantime as he hated Ralph Burlington, Glyndon always kept his temper in any colloquy between them, because he knew that it was the best way to make the circus-master lose his. That air of cool superiority chafed Ralph far more than any outburst of passion. None the less, beneath the calm exterior the fire was smoldering, and might blaze up in sudden resentment at any moment.

Lady Jane acquitted herself well that afternoon at rehearsal, and Glyndon rewarded her with some oranges which he had brought with him.

"Good old girl, splendid old beauty!" he murmured, while stroking Lady Jane's glossy arched neck. "How I wish we were free to leave this cursed place at an hour's notice! And yet, if the chance were mine, I wouldn't avail myself of it till I'd had a settling with that low-bred hound who has rendered my life a burden to me for the last five months. Revenge, that is what I want; it would be sweeter than liberty, and by Jove I'll have it ere long, whatever I pay for it! He shall learn that I am not to be insulted with impunity."

He set his teeth hard as he spoke, and his dark blue eyes shone with angry light. Evidently Arthur Glyndon had deep and undisciplined passions at work within his breast, subject only to a surface control.

Lady Jane, blissfully ignorant of human woes, rubbed her beautiful head caressingly against her master's cheek. A strong attachment existed between the pair, and Glyndon patted and praised her anew before handing her over to the groom in attendance.

The interior of the circus looked very bright and attractive that night when the doors were opened. It was brilliantly lighted, while that peculiar aroma of sawdust and orange-peel, inseparable from a circus, pervaded everything not unpleasantly.

From the best crimson-covered seats to the sixpenny gallery the structure was crowded. The mayor and corporation of Fairleigh, received upon their entry by Ralph Burlington in person, occupied a prominent position. Children's eyes, bright with expectation, were fixed upon the curtained doorway from behind which so many wonders were presently to issue.

The band struck up a lively dance-tune, the curtain veiling the wide doorway was drawn aside, a cream-coloured horse with a large flat-saddle on his back, trotted into the ring, followed by Jimmy Waters the clown, grotesquely attired, with a whole battery of new jokes to fire off, after he had stood upon his head, and saluted the audience in that inverted attitude, with the "Here we are again," that never fails to evoke a roar of laughter.

Then, led by the ring-master, a pretty child

clad in airy tarlatan skirts of pink and white looped with flowers, came into the ring, and making her bow took a preliminary canter before going through the hoops and banners prepared for her.

Her performance was followed by some clever acrobatic business by two brothers—dark sinewy, lithe fellows, without an ounce of superfluous flesh about them. Then came Arthur Glyndon's turn with Lady Jane. As he entered the ring, and made his bow to the audience, the beautiful glossy mare following him, clad in ordinary evening dress, a frown rested upon Ralph Burlington's face.

"The horse is in a nice temper to-night," whispered a groom to another. "If anybody is bold enough to mount his mare, he'll catch it, I'm thinking."

For some reason, although the rehearsal had been satisfactory, Lady Jane went through her performance very badly for once. Perhaps the provincial stiffness of her had somehow required of her, the chance to be seen at her worst. However well-known tricks she broke down, and was slow to obey the word of command.

Arthur Glyndon lost his temper, and applied his whip more sharply than usual. Lady Jane's high spirit resented this treatment. She dashed out vigorously with her hind legs, and the applause that followed her disappearance was of a very qualified nature.

Purple with rage, Ralph Burlington followed Glyndon to the dressing-tent.

"That disgraceful performance was your fault—not the mare's," he shouted. "You planned it for to-night in order to annoy me to bring discredit upon the circus, you scoundrel! It would serve you right if I were to horsewhip you soundly."

Arthur Glyndon faced him with compressed lips and eyes that flashed fire.

"You lie," he said, sternly. "I am not responsible for the mare's failure to-night. It annoyed me as much as it did you. It was not a planned thing. When I wish to punish a man for having insulted me, I go to work in a more straightforward style, Mr. Burlington."

"As if I should take your word," sneered the circus-master. "I was a fool to have anything to do with you in the first instance, then you came to me entirely without credentials. You may be a thief, a forger, a murderer, for all your fine gentlemen airs. Honest men are not so anxious to keep their past history a profound secret. Your broken-down gentleman is, as a rule, the biggest blackguard hanging!"

"After giving you due precedence, you mean," corrected Glyndon. "What a pity it would be to rob you of your prerogative."

Completely carried away by passion, Ralph lifted his hand and dealt the younger man a blow that felled him to the ground.

In a second he was upon his feet again, rushing at his assailant. But half a score of men held him back, uttering well-meaning remonstrances, while openly condemning Ralph Burlington's conduct in striking that cowardly blow.

Aware that he had gone rather too far, the proprietor went back to the circus, leaving Arthur Glyndon surrounded by a crowd of sympathisers.

## CHAPTER II.

He soon shook them off, however. His outraged manhood resented anything in the shape of pity.

It only seemed to deepen the humiliation he endured. Leaving the dressing-tent, in and out of which male artistes in tights, and velvet, and spangles, were constantly popping, Arthur Glyndon roamed off to the stables, his cheek still burning and tingling from that shameful blow, his heart well-nigh bursting with rage and bitterness.

"I wonder what the end of this affair will

be like?" said one of the men when he was gone.

" Glyndon will get the sack after to-night's business," said another; "not that he's the one in fault. Burlington has treated him shamefully for months past—just as if he'd a special spite against the fellow for being a bit of a swell, and refusing to be bullied like the rest of us!"

" I fancy he'd be afraid to keep Glyndon on, even if he were willing to stay," interposed a third, " but for our interference the governor would have got what he richly deserves, a thrashing just now. Glyndon's blood is up and he won't pocket that insult quietly or forget the blow that followed it. Why should he?"

" Why, indeed!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Arnardine Montmorenci, the pretty, dark-eyed, dark-haired girl who rode the bare-backed horse, and who had run round upon hearing high words to know what was amiss. " I hope Mr. Glyndon will punish that monster and give him a lesson that he won't soon forget. Poor fellow, to abuse him and knock him down for what he couldn't help! The mare was in a bad temper to-night, I saw that at once, and Ralph Burlington might have seen it had he wished to. I believe he hates Mr. Glyndon for being so superior to him in every way. Where is he now?"

" Whom? Glyndon?"

" Yes."

" Somewhere about the place. He wouldn't stay with us. He's not a fellow to say much, whatever he may feel. I wonder what he means doing?"

" If he goes away, he can't take the mare with him," said one of the acrobats. " Burlington's advanced him some money on it, and Glyndon will have to repay that before he's free to claim the animal. It's denced hard on him all round, poor beggar."

" If I'd got the money I'd lend it to him, that I would," said Madle. Arnardine, impulsively. " It's a mercy that Ralph Burlington keeps single. A nice time any poor woman would have of it as his wife—the wretch!"

" Is he a bachelor?" asked a man almost new to the circus, and those connected with it.

" Yes; at least we've never heard of his having anybody belonging to him," replied the girl. " He isn't the sort of man to feel the want of them; he's made of cast-iron, and he's got no human feeling in him."

" Nature shaped him in a queer mould," interposed Johnny Waters, fresh from the ring, and the laughter he had excited there.

" I hope she broke it afterwards to avoid turning out any more of the same sort—one's enough," laughed Madle. Arnardine, as she ran quickly into the circus upon hearing her name called.

Meanwhile Arthur Glyndon was standing by Lady Jane in the quiet, dark stable, his face crushed against her sleek neck, oblivious of her late shortcomings that had cost him so dear—oblivious of all save the blow he had received, and the burning desire that possessed him to punish the man who had dealt it.

He was near enough to the circus to hear the lively music, the frequent bursts of laughter, and the applause proceeding from within. They jarred horribly upon him as he stood there, miserable, vindictive, full of rage, yet powerless to avenge himself against the man who had treated him so shamefully.

Never again would he enter that ring. Rather would he go away, leaving Lady Jane behind until he could redeem her. Yes, Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome should know him no more; yet if he were to retain his self-respect that blow must be wiped out; those insults extending over several months duly acknowledged and repaid, ere he took his departure.

To thrash Ralph Burlington within an inch of his life when others were not present to interfere between them. It seemed but a poor, unsatisfactory revenge, a transient punish-

ment; after all. In a few days the circus-master would have recovered from its effects, while he, Arthur Glyndon, might be cooling his heels in prison as the price of what he had done.

To wound the circus-master's heart, if he possessed one, rather than his flesh, to embitter his whole life, to lower his pride and arrogance permanently—this was the retribution for which Arthur Glyndon longed, yet how could he obtain it?

" If he were but vulnerable," exclaimed the young man, aloud; " if there were but a soft spot, a weakness, a passion about him through which I might strike and inflict a deadly wound, it would be a vengeance worth having. Ralph Burlington, however, cares for neither man, woman, nor child."

Lady Jane, as if anxious to atone for her recent bad behaviour, rubbed her head coquettishly against Arthur Glyndon's shoulder, and sought to attract his attention. But he disregarded these overtures on the part of his favourite; his mind was too busy with the scene in which he had figured so conspicuously half-an-hour ago.

" Why, Glyndon, old man, what are you doing here, all by yourself in the dark?" said a cheery voice breaking in upon his reverie, as, Charlie Becker, the Shakespearian clown, in cap and bells, and pointed many-coloured doublet, entered the stable, having finished his turn in the ring, and given place again to Jimmy Waters.

" I suppose I can stop here if I please, without asking permission?" returned Glyndon, haughtily.

" How now, what's the matter? Since I came hither I have heard strange news," spouted Charley, quoting from *King Lear*. " Don't be rusty with me, old fellow. I'm not responsible for Burlington's doings, you know. I was awfully sorry to hear that you and he had had a row."

" He has insulted me foully in the presence of others," said Arthur Glyndon from between his clenched teeth; " and some day he shall bitterly repent having done so."

" He's a hard nail," rejoined the clown, leaning against Lady Jane, one arm thrown carelessly across her, as he spoke; " cruelly hard, where he dare be. He takes advantage of his position as master to make it hot for us all. After this you'll be going, I suppose?"

" Yes," said Glyndon, shortly; " But Ralph Burlington shall have good cause to remember me later on."

" Take my advice, Glyndon, since it's well-meant, and don't get yourself into worse trouble by trying to retaliate upon Burlington," rejoined Charley Becker, giving his head a little shake that made the bells on his cap ring again. " If it's only a fool's advice it's worth having. In this world might gets the upper hand of right too often. Burlington has behaved very badly to you—very badly—but he's got the position and the money. Any attempt to injure him will only recoil upon yourself."

But Glyndon was in a mood to resent advice of any kind.

" I know how to manage my own affairs, thank you, without any interference," he said. " You and I have always been on good terms, however, with each other, Becker. We may as well shake hands and part friends, since we are not likely to meet again after to-night."

" If a trifle of money would help you," said the clown, " why, I should be glad to—"

" Thanks, old fellow; you're very kind, but I've enough for present necessities," replied Glyndon, touched by the other's generosity. " I dare say I shall soon meet with an engagement of some kind, good, bad, or different."

" And the mare?"

" Must remain here, until I can repay the money lent to me by Burlington. I am going to ask you a favour, Becker. Will you look to her now and then, and ensure her being kindly treated when I am gone?"

" That I will, but she won't perform half so well with anyone else as with you; and how

will you obtain an engagement without her?"

" Oh, I've had more than enough of circus life already!" exclaimed Glyndon. " I shall go in for some other line."

" By-the-bye, you were wrong in that remark made to yourself as I entered the stable just now," the clown went on.

" What remark?"

" You said Ralph Burlington cared for neither man, woman, or child! Now, I happen to know he cares a great deal for one woman or girl rather—his daughter."

" His daughter?" repeated Glyndon. " I was not aware that he had one."

" Very few persons are aware of the fact," said Charley, jumping up on to Lady Jane's back, and seating himself there comfortably. " I found it out for myself. Burlington doesn't know that his secret is no secret to me. There's no special reason why I should keep it."

" Is he ashamed to own her?" asked Arthur Glyndon.

" No, oh dear no; quite the reverse. He's afraid that she would be ashamed to own him if she knew the nature of his profession. He's had her brought up amongst the daughters of titled people, in tip-top style. He's given her to understand that he's—a—ha!—a gentleman of good family and independent means, always travelling about for the benefit of his health. She's no more idea that her dad is only a circus-proprietor than—than this horse!"

" How did you become acquainted with these domestic details, pray?" said Arthur Glyndon, listening intently, with a set concentrated expression on his face in the darkness.

" Well, to begin with, I've travelled with this circus for several years now. No professional has stayed so long with Burlington as I have done. I'm pretty well seasoned to his bullying by this time; he knows in my case it's like pouring water on a duck's back. It struck me as odd a year or two ago, that he should always disappear in the summer at precisely the same date for a fortnight, leaving Collins, the ringmaster, in sole charge. I should never have discovered where he went to, though, but for receiving a telegram from my sister, who lives at Penwyr, a dull little watering-place in Cornwall, asking me to come to her at once, as she was very ill. Burlington had started for his mysterious holiday—which he never made the least allusion to—on the previous day. I obtained leave of absence from Collins, however, and started at once for Penwyr. When I got there my sister had taken a turn for the better—indeed, she soon recovered. I was taking a walk one day by the sea, thinking how precious dull everything was down there, when who should I descry on ahead but Ralph Burlington and a young lady."

" Go on," said Arthur Glyndon impatiently, as the clown paused.

" I was surprised," said Charley, resuming his narrative. " So that's your little game, thinks I. Is it wife or sweetheart that you are walking with? I felt certain it couldn't be his wife, because he was so attentive to her. Well, feeling thoroughly curious I made inquiries, found out at which hotel they were staying, and contrived to get on good terms with the young lady's maid. She told me her mistress's name was Eva Burlington, that she was being educated at a school or college near Leamington—Eversleigh College I think she called it—and that her father was a very wealthy gentleman, who always brought her down to Penwyr to spend the summer holidays or part of them. The rest of the year he was abroad. A nice little tale that to be told to Burlington's clown!"

" And the girl has been brought up under a false impression?" said Arthur Glyndon, eagerly.

" Yes; she fancies she belongs to a regular swell family, and Burlington encourages the delusion. Now I know why the circus never by any chance goes to Leamington. It is that

the name shan't lead to his being detected as a fraud by his own daughter, whom he loves dearly."

"Are you sure of all this? Is the maid in the secret?"

"Bless you, no; she believes Burlington to be a gentleman. I gained most of my information from a conversation overheard when lying amongst the rocks one fine morning. Burlington and the girl didn't see me. They came and sat within earshot, and I—well, I kept my ears wide open."

"What did you learn of any importance?"

"I gathered from what they said that Burlington had originally married a lady; that his wife had died soon after the birth of her child, and that Burlington's heart is set upon educating his daughter splendidly, and marrying her well later on to some titled swell. Ambitious, isn't it, for a circus proprietor? But he's made a lot of money. She thinks that he holds some berth under Government, which necessitates his frequent absence. She believes in him implicitly, and he—well—he idolises her. You would hardly have recognised him, Glyndon, as they sat there together; he was so altered for the better. He spoke quite gently, and when the girl looked up in his face and made some laughing remark, he stooped down and kissed her. Fancy Ralph Burlington kissing anybody!"

"But, later on, when this young lady leaves school she must be undeceived."

"I fancy that Ralph will dispose of the circus before then," was the reply. "Circuses are not what they used to be. He'll take a big house somewhere, and instal his daughter in it as mistress. That's my name called—I must be off. I don't know why I've told you all this, except to prove to you that Burlington is human, in spite of his brutal ways. Ta-ta, old fellow, see you again some day, I hope, and don't be down-hearted."

Sliding down from off Lady Jane's back, the clown disappeared, after grasping Arthur Glyndon's hand.

He was alone again, but with a definite aim in view, a settled purpose. The clown's story had supplied him with a clue, and he would follow it up, regardless of difficulties or hindrances in his desire to be a venged upon Ralph Burlington.

He felt no pity, no remorse, although his scheme, if carried out in its entirety, would punish the innocent as well as the guilty. Ralph's conduct had robbed him of all gentler feeling, leaving only that intense longing for retribution behind.

"To break his heart, to foil his most cherished plans, to wound him through his affection for this girl, who probably resembles him in disposition," muttered Glyndon; "we should be quite then, and I could afford to leave him in peace. The scheme is a wild one, and it may fail, but since there is no other open to me, at least I will try it. Charley, old man, you have done me a good turn tonight."

After bestowing a parting caress upon Lady Jane, Arthur Glyndon left the vicinity of the circus, and went to his poor lodging. Packing his one portmanteau, he prepared to leave Fairleigh at once.

"I am not a bad-looking fellow, and I can make myself agreeable when I please," he said, in a low tone, as he regarded his own reflection in the cracked glass, much as if he were criticising someone else, and without any spark of vanity, his manner being grim and business-like in the extreme. "Well, *qui vivra verra*. I fancy, Ralph Burlington, there is trouble in store for you, *mon ami*."

He left Fairleigh by the midnight train, and his abrupt departure excited much comment among the circus people. Everybody pitied him, everybody united in blaming Ralph Burlington.

Burlington was rather relieved to think that he had got rid of the young man so easily, while retaining possession of a valuable trained horse, upon which he had only a lien of ten pounds.

When his temper cooled down he had regretted that hasty blow, and thought it likely that Arthur Glyndon would summons him for the assault.

To find that he had gone off quietly, making no protest, not even claiming the small amount of money due to him, was, to say the least of it, satisfactory.

Ralph Burlington's satisfaction would have been short-lived, however, had it been possible for anyone to reveal to him the exact nature of the mission upon which the man so grossly insulted by him had gone away.

### CHAPTER III.

EVERSLEIGH COLLEGE was a large, red-brick building on the outskirts of Leamington, standing in its own trimly-kept grounds.

A few years before it would have been called a select boarding school. Now, however, when the very cat's-meat man is a "purveyor of feline delicacies," and high-sounding titles are so much in request, it owned a more learned and imposing appellation.

Only the daughters of noblemen and good old families, girls enjoying blue blood and pedigree, were received as students at Eversleigh College.

The principal of it, Miss Minerva Lexicon, prided herself upon its select character. Ralph Burlington, wishing his daughter to be educated there, had done well to conceal his social status, to hoodwink Miss Minerva so effectually. Otherwise the girl would never have been allowed to pass those classic portals.

Everything was taught at Eversleigh College. To ordinary feminine accomplishments were added classics, mathematics, each known branch of science, calisthenics, and goodness only knows what besides.

Yet, somehow, in spite of the cramming and culture, the high pressure to which they were subjected, the "fair girl graduates" were still intensely human, taking a very strong interest in such a frivolous subject as dress, and a still stronger one in the equally frivolous subject of lovers.

Notes were sometimes smuggled into and out of the college which had no bearing upon the studies conducted there; looks and occasionally words were interchanged out-of-doors between the girl students and possible lovers.

Miss Minerva Lexicon had her work cut out to keep them all in order, brimming over as they were with exuberant spirits, ready for either mischief or love—whichever came first.

Miss Minerva was a tall, thin, acidulated, elderly lady, who wore spectacles and, had all the "ologies" at her fingers' end.

She exercised great discretion in her choice of masters and governesses, the former being invariably elderly, and by no means interesting so far as personal appearance went—not by any means the sort of men with one of whom a romantic girl might wish to elope.

The drawing-master having fallen ill, however shortly before an important examination, she had been compelled to break through her rule for once, and engage a much younger and decidedly handsome man, who had presented himself, for the time being, not without inward misgivings.

The new-comer was clever, though, and he had referred her to a well-known artist, who praised him highly, and went bail as it were, for his efficiency and respectability.

By keeping a sharp look-out upon the drawing-master when his pupils were present, Miss Minerva hoped to avert any evil consequences.

Among the girls bending over their sketches one glorious spring morning was Eva Burlington, over whose shoulder the drawing-master frequently glanced to ascertain what progress she was making.

Ralph Burlington's only daughter was a

slim, willowy maiden of seventeen, with large, liquid, long-lashed, hazel eyes, full of warm, sunny light, golden hair twisted round her shapely little head in thick coils, piquant features, and a complexion delicate as the inside of a seashell, a girl who promised to develop by-and-by into a very beautiful woman.

Eva Burlington was a favourite with all her fellow-students. *Riante*, mirthful, high-spirited, she was yet beneath that bright, thoughtless exterior, all fun and sparkle, extremely sensitive, unselfish, and lovable. Few of her companions guessed how deeply Eva could love, when once her heart was touched. They knew, though, that she had a rare fund of sympathy, a manner which fascinated all who came beneath its spell, and not a girl in the college disliked or avoided Eva Burlington.

She seemed to have inherited nothing of her father's arrogant, under-bred, coarse-grained nature. In every sense of the word Eva was a lady—dainty, refined, lovely. She resembled the mother whose untimely death had perhaps helped to make Ralph Burlington so harsh and repellent to all around him save his daughter.

"Miss Burlington, that line denoting the horizon in your sketch is not quite even!" said the deep musical voice of the new drawing-master, "and these trees in the foreground require more shading."

Eva's fair face flushed, as she proceeded to carry out the drawing master's instructions; the little white hand that held the pencil trembled slightly, and yet he had spoken in anything but a severe tone. Somehow his close vicinity always affected Eva strongly, sending electric thrills through her, rendering her at times wildly, foolishly happy, at others vaguely sad.

This drawing-master was a man little over thirty, with an aristocratic handsome face, brown hair rippling over a broad, white forehead, and dark blue eyes. His name was Arthur Glyndon.

In coming to Leamington to work out if possible that wild scheme of vengeance against Ralph Burlington, suggested to him by the clown's story, Arthur Glyndon had scarcely dared to hope that it would prove successful, the odds being so terribly against him.

Chance, however, had favoured him wonderfully, as it does sometimes favour the desperate. The illness of the gentleman who taught drawing at Eversleigh College came under his notice ere he had been at Leamington two days.

Deeming this opportunity of making Eva Burlington's acquaintance too good to be lost, he had offered to fill the vacant post *pro tem.* a former college friend, now a rising artist, good-naturedly supplying him with the necessary credentials.

Both at school and at college Arthur Glyndon had been famous for his clever dashing pencil sketches.

A little practice had served to revive this neglected accomplishment, which, in Glyndon's case, required some toning-down to adapt it to the requirement of a young ladies' drawing-master.

Miss Minerva Lexicon, little dreaming that she was introducing a handsome wolf in sheep's clothing amidst her lambs, had duly engaged him, and Arthur Glyndon, in the course of a month or two, felt that his revenge was in a fair way of being gratified.

Eva Burlington was not indifferent to him; of this he had assured himself already.

Cautiously, very cautiously, and by slow degrees, lest he should startle her or excite suspicion, he had given her to understand, more by look than word, that she was more to him than a pupil—that she and she alone was responsible for his being there at all. And Eva had fallen blindly into the snare spread for her.

## THE LONDON READER.

Half-child, half-woman,  
" Standing with reluctant feet  
Where the brook and river meet."

Conscious of new forces and emotions stirring within her, of vague hopes and fears and longings which she could not define, Arthur Glyndon had given shape to them all, and taught her, too early, the meaning of love.

The few words he had contrived to whisper in her ear from time to time had excited her curiosity as well as her love.

Who could he be, this grave handsome man, who preferred her to all the others, who had come to Eversleigh, as he averred, that he might be near her and win her love? Perhaps a nobleman in disguise.

Eva's novel-reading had imbued her with some rather romantic notions, and she had no experience of the world to counterbalance their effect.

Already Arthur Glyndon was enthroned in her pure girlish heart as king and hero. No man half so interesting, half so handsome, had ever crossed her path before. She trusted and believed in him implicitly, and in her case the attachment was likely to prove a lasting one, making or marring her happiness for life.

And Arthur Glyndon? The result he sought to compass, a cruel and unprincipled one, even allowing for the provocation he had received, was a secret marriage between Eva and himself. To make her his wife, then to take her straight to her father, ruthlessly dispelling the delusion with regard to his profession which Ralph Burlington had been at such pains to maintain towards his daughter, while presenting himself to the circus-master under the unwelcome aspect of his son-in-law.

It was a cruel scheme of reprisal, because it involved the innocent as well as the guilty. But Arthur Glyndon had pledged himself to carry it out, and he never went back from his word. Burlington had insulted him grossly, and he should pay the penalty through his much-loved daughter. Glyndon's strong passions and vindictive nature had always been against him; he had never sought to curb them. Otherwise, he would have continued to occupy a very different position to his present one.

When Ralph Burlington recognised in the husband of his daughter—for whom he had anticipated a title and a splendid match—a professional lately in his employ; when that daughter saw her father for the first time amidst his everyday surroundings in the circus, stripped of the surface-refinement he assumed in her presence—loud, coarse, abusive, his real self—then, and only then, would Arthur Glyndon feel himself amply avenged. At first he had been indifferent with regard to the girl herself, and what she might be like. Had she been plain, awkward, uninteresting, he would have sought to make her his wife just the same, in order to effect his purpose.

But, as he fell in readily with his plans, poor child; as he saw her day by day, beautiful, interesting, lovable, with no trace of her father about her, as her transparent, guileless nature unfolded itself for his inspection, he began to experience some remorse for the part he was playing.

Arthur Glyndon actually wished that Eva had resembled her father in disposition. Then he would have felt hardly any scruple in making her his wife, since the worst of the bargain would be his. As it was, he could hardly tell whether this fair, gentle, lovely girl was becoming unspeakably dear to him or not. He fought against the weakness stoutly, but still it remained.

He had flirted violently with many women; until now he had never been in love with one. Love! No, it must not, it dare not, be thought of in connection with Eva Burlington, and the vengeance he meditated. He told himself this savagely, wondering what had come over him, yet he could not bring himself to hate Eva, or even feel indifferent to her, as at first. Presently, as the drawing-lesson proceeded,

he bent over her again, and taking the pencil from her hand wrote in minute characters on the margin of the sketch,—

"Meet me in the summer-house, at the back of the college, at six o'clock this evening. I have something to say to you there. Rub this out!"

Eva scribbled a rapid "Yes;" then with her india-rubber effaced the whole correspondence. No one had witnessed the transaction. Eva, as an advanced pupil, sat a little apart from the other girls; the governess in attendance merely supposed Mr. Glyndon to be giving her instructions—which he was, only not of the kind required by the lesson.

His request had filled Eva with mingled delight and fear. What could he have to say to her in the summer-house that evening? He had never asked her to meet him anywhere before, and Eva felt just a little frightened, while conscious that she was doing wrong, and acting deceitfully in granting his request.

She met him punctually at the hour appointed. The other girls were playing lawn-tennis in front of the college, and her disappearance had passed unnoticed.

He was waiting for her just inside the summer-house. Her large hazel eyes rested upon his face with a timid, pleading expression in their liquid depths as they met.

"How good of you to come!" he said, reassuringly, yet without much warmth in his voice. Was he not striving hard to kill that new-born inconvenient love within his breast, to let chill indifference or active hatred take its place?

"I must not stay long," she replied, "or I shall be missed. Indeed I ought not to be here at all, Mr. Glyndon; it is wrong—deceitful. Only you said that you—that—"

"I had something to tell you," he interposed, "and so I have. Can you not guess at its nature, Eva?"

Her head drooped, and she made him no reply.

"But for you, Eva, I should never have come to Eversleigh College," he continued, with a set look on his face, as of a man determined to carry out a disagreeable and hateful task at any cost, by the strength of an iron will?"

"Eva, do you love me?"

"Yes—that is, I think I do," she rejoined, confusedly. "Oh! why do you ask?"

"Because I desire to win your love," he said, in a gentler tone, taking her hand in his. "Would you feel sorry if I were to leave this place never to return?"

"I could not bear it," she exclaimed, impulsively. "Oh! Arthur—Mr. Glyndon, do not go!"

"If you wish it I will stay," he went on; "it depends entirely upon you. You do love me then, Eva?"

"Yes, dearly—very dearly!"

"And you will even allow yourself to become engaged to me—if not at once, later on?"

"I cannot promise that," she said, with a startled glance. "My father—"

"Is a rich man, I believe, while I am only a poor one," continued Arthur Glyndon, determined at least not to deceive her with regard to his worldly affairs. "Inform him of your love for me, or bid me go straight to him to ask his sanction to it, and he would at once refuse; he would separate us for ever. Either remain silent for the present, or bid me go."

"I cannot do that," she murmured. "I would rather trust you blindly. And yet, if you only knew him, he is such a kind father—such a loving, indulgent father—and I have never had any secrets from him. I am sure he would not refuse his consent to our engagement if he knew that my happiness depended upon it."

Arthur Glyndon smiled grimly.

"I know Mr. Burlington—slightly," he said. "If I went to him, he would style me a fortune-hunter, and send me about my business. Now, whatever my faults may be, Eva, I am

not a fortune-hunter. I seek to woo and win Mr. Burlington's daughter alone. I care nothing for the money which you may or may not inherit. Not one penny of it will ever be mine—of that I am convinced. As it is, I may not always remain poor! I may have more to offer you some day than I have now. Will you trust me, and meet me here sometimes, when an opportunity occurs?"

"If my father would consent, why not—"

"It is useless to dwell upon that. Has he not told you that he expects you to marry a title, and have I one to offer you?"

She was silenced, remembering her father's ambitious views for her, fearing to lose her lover.

"For the present I will say nothing," she replied, "with regard to our mutual love. I—I could not bear to be parted from you entirely, Arthur. Will you not tell me where you first saw me, and when—and just a little about more yourself?"

"You doubt me," he said, reproachfully.

"No, oh no! tell me as much or as little as you like," she protested, her sweet face raised to his. "Is it not natural that, loving you, I should feel interested in all that concerns you?"

"Quite! To begin with, I first saw you when walking with the other girls one day, and you know the result. My own history is not a very eventful one. The usual poor, but honest parents, a good education, then my own way to make in the world by teaching others."

The mocking ring in his voice jarred upon the girl's earnest mood. Perceiving this, he stooped down and kissed her forehead. She was just a little disappointed that he had not kissed her lips instead.

"Surely he did not tell me once that he loved me!" reflected Eva, when they had parted; "yet he made me confess my love for him, and the one thing implies the other. Of course it does, and yet I wish that he had said, 'I love you' in as many words. Is it wrong, I wonder, to care so much for him, stranger as he is—to let him fill my heart so completely?"

"So far—success," mused Arthur Glyndon, as he smoked his cigar that night on the parade. "The poor child certainly loves me—I can bend her easily to my will. I wish, though, that I could have compassed my end by any other means. Well, if her love survives the shock of the double disclosure in store for her, I shall not make her a bad husband in one sense. I shan't beat, neglect, or otherwise ill-treat her. And the daughter of a circus-proprietor might feel proud to marry a Fitz—oh, what a fool I am!—as if that were not all past and done with long ago!"

## CHAPTER IV.

If some kind fairy could only have informed Miss Minerva Lexicon of the love affair being carried on between Eva Burlington and the drawing-master within the sacred precincts of the college it would promptly have been nipped in the bud.

No fairy or mortal intervening, however, Arthur Glyndon and Eva found occasional opportunities for carrying on their courtship without being detected. If these opportunities were few and far between, Eva, at least, valued them all the more on that account.

Her schoolfellows fancied her to be less bright and sparkling, more pensive and thoughtful, than of yore. Otherwise she appeared unchanged.

She maintained a strict silence respecting her love for Arthur Glyndon, taking no girl friend into her confidence.

How well she loved him she hardly knew herself. All the wealth of passionate devotion that her young ardent nature was capable of had been poured out at his feet. Her heart was in his keeping, for him to trifle with or cherish at will.

The only thing that troubled Eva was the secrecy upon which Glyndon insisted. She did not like the idea of deceiving either the lady in whose care she was placed, or her father.

Conscience pricked her terribly at times. Yet Glyndon had assured her that to reveal their engagement—for it had become an engagement by this time; witness the pretty pearl and turquoise ring, hidden away in Eva's desk—would be to insure their immediate and lasting separation, and she had not the courage with which to risk such an alternative.

As the summer vacation drew nigh, Arthur Glyndon became very impatient. If he did not win her consent to a runaway marriage previous to that his chance might be lost for ever.

She would go away to join her father at Penwy, and circumstances might erect a barrier between them which he, Glyndon, would be powerless to pull down.

If he found it an easy matter to influence Eva—a loving, inexperienced, trustful girl—he found it very hard just at this time to control himself.

*He was in love with her—hopelessly in love—fool, dolt, idiot, though he called himself, for giving way to such infatuation.*

Her beauty and innocence, her disposition so frank, generous, sincere, had unconsciously conquered first his hate, then his indifference, and left him as much her lover as if no evil motive had first prompted him in wooing her.

Arthur Glyndon would fain have made Eva Burlington his wife now, apart from any revenge he sought to obtain by means of their marriage. She, the daughter of the man he most hated, had won his heart in exchange for her own.

It had come to this with Arthur Glyndon. He would have relinquished his long-cherished scheme of vengeance against the circus-master had it been possible, rather than have inflicted pain and disillusion upon Eva, when once she became his wife.

But it was not possible. As if to punish him for indulging in such violent passions, his scheme of retribution had become so intermingled with his love affair that, in order to carry the one to a satisfactory conclusion, he must needs work out the other at the same time. Besides, he had sworn to be revenged upon Ralph Burlington, and he could not break his oath. The utmost he could do was to soften and mitigate the blow ere it fell upon Eva, and presented both her father and her lover to her in their true characters.

"To see her turn away from me in angry loathing, to hear her say that she could never forgive such deception as mine, would be horrible," he reflected. "Well, I have brought the situation upon myself, and I must bear the consequences. It is *her* future that troubles me far more than my own. Yet, apart from all revengeful motives, I must and will marry her now. I love her too well ever to let her become another man's wife, and she—well, for the present, at any rate, she loves me."

When he thought he had led up to it sufficiently, Arthur Glyndon hinted at the expediency of a runaway marriage, since, under no other circumstances, could they hope to come together.

At first Eva promptly refused, and declared such a course impossible. Then, as Glyndon represented to her that it was their only chance, that no *vid. media* between a runaway match and complete final separation existed for them, she wavered.

"It seems so dreadful," she said tremulously; "and it will make papa so unhappy. If you would only go to him, Arthur, and tell him how we love each other, I am sure he would grant you favourable hearing."

"My dear little girl, that subject has already been threshed out between us. Were I to do as you wish we should never be allowed to meet again. No, if you do not love me and trust me well enough to become my wife ere

the summer vacation I shall quit England for America, with little hope of ever returning."

"What would you have me do?" she asked, unable to face the future without him.

"Leave the college early one morning, and join me at the spot where I shall be awaiting you. Then we will go together to a village church, a few miles distant, where the banns have been duly published, and become man and wife. It is not such a terrible programme, after all; is it, Eva?"

"I hardly know," she said, smiling through her tears. "The secrecy, the deception, is what I most object to in it."

"But you don't object to me?"

"You are fishing for a compliment, sir, which you will not get," she retorted, some of the sparkle and brightness coming back to her manner. "Men are frightfully vain. I will marry you in the manner you describe rather than send you away broken-hearted, upon one condition."

"And that is?"

"That you take me to my father as soon as the ceremony is over, that I may tell him all, and implore his forgiveness."

Arthur Glyndon was silent, and the girl little knew how exactly her request coincided with his original plan of action. It had been his intention to take her at once to her father after their marriage in order that he might be amply revenged by witnessing the scene sure to ensue—but now?

"Do you insist upon this, Eva?" he asked, slowly.

"Of course I do," she replied, with unusual vehemence. "If you refuse I cannot marry you, Arthur, dearly as I love you. Could I be happy, as your wife, had I omitted to ask my father's forgiveness for marrying without his consent? I have yielded so much that you might surely indulge me in this."

"It shall be as you wish," he said, with averted eyes. "I may make the necessary arrangements for our marriage now, Eva, darling?"

"Yes, I suppose so," said the girl, half reluctantly. "Oh, what will Miss Lexicon and the girls say when they find I am gone? You will be kind and loving to me always, Arthur, since for your sake I shall have cut myself adrift, perhaps from every familiar tie."

"I could not be otherwise than kind and loving to you," he exclaimed, drawing her towards him suddenly, and kissing her upon lip, cheek, and brow. "I love you, Eva—aye, a thousand times better than life itself; and mine is not a boy's transitory passion, but the deep, lasting love of a man. Whatever my faults may be, want of affection for you has no place among them."

"And your friends, Arthur?" she inquired, timidly. "Will you let them know what we intend doing?"

"My friends, child!" he repeated, bitterly. "I have none. I told you, I think, that both my parents died long ago. I have only two or three cousins, who ignore my existence, since they are rich, while I am miserably poor. No, it will not be necessary for me to send out cards and cake. Never mind; we shall be none the less happy for dispensing with all that conventional nonsense. I want nothing beyond my sweet little bride."

"If papa will only forgive us and take you into favour, Arthur, I shall be the happiest girl in the world."

"You have not been much with your father—yon know but little of him, do you?" asked Glyndon, abruptly.

"No; that is what I regret so much," she replied, a sad look dawning in her beautiful eyes. "Beyond that fortnight in the summer—always spent at Penwy—and an occasional flying visit to me here at the college, I see nothing of my father. From a child I have been brought up at school, knowing no home life. I believe my father has a Government appointment, something in the Secret Service. He has almost admitted as much, and it involves constant travelling from place

to place, either at home or abroad. That is why he cannot have me with him frequently."

A smile, at once compassionate and ironical, curved Arthur Glyndon's lips. Ralph Burlington, the circus-proprietor had, in his love for his only child, palmed off a strange story upon her.

"And when you meet your father is invariably kind to you, Eva?" he said.

"Kind! oh, I cannot tell you how kind. He loads me with expensive presents, he denies me nothing that I ask him for. That is why I feel so reluctant to grieve or deceive him. Why, he has never spoken harshly to me in his life!"

Arthur Glyndon decided in his own mind, upon hearing this, that it was possible for a man to have two sides to his character, diametrically opposed to each other. Burlington the circus-master, and Burlington the father, did not appear to have many points in common.

"Run in now, dearest!" he said to the lovely girl beside him, "or you may be missed. It would never do to arouse Miss Lexicon's suspicions, you know."

"Supposing that—just at first—papa should prove obstinate, and refuse to forgive or to help us?" suggested Eva, lingering. "Is it very terrible to be poor, Archie?"

"It's better, of course, to be rich," he replied, with a languid and a frown. "You don't suppose, however, that I am looking to your father to provide for us? He is most unlikely to do so, Eva. I have enough for present wants," he continued, speaking more to himself than to her; "and Lady Jane is good for fifty guineas."

"Lady Jane! Who is she?" cried Eva.

"Oh, a former pupil of mine," he said coolly, "I trained; that is, I taught her nearly all she knows, and she would help me at a pinch."

"I would rather you did not apply to her except in case of extreme need," said Eva, half inclined to be jealous.

"Very well, I won't," he rejoined laughingly, as he kissed her again before letting her go.

Eva returned to the college in a very divided frame of mind. The deceit she was practising preyed upon her, while, much as she loved Arthur Glyndon, she could not ignore the fact that she understood him very imperfectly, although about to place herself and her future happiness in his keeping.

A week later Eva quitted the college early one morning, as even the servants were astir, and met Glyndon in the high road, where he was waiting for her with a dog-cart.

She thought him unusually morose and silent as they bowled smoothly and rapidly along between flowering hedge-rows, from which the sun had not yet kissed off the sparkling dew, while all around them the birds were singing gloriously.

"Oh! Arthur, how dreadful it seems!" she said, presently, glancing up at him, with great, frightened, wistful eyes, "to be away from them all for ever—the people I have known and loved. How they will reproach me for leaving them thus!"

"It is not too late to turn back if you regret your decision," he replied, coldly.

"That is cruel and unlike you," she said, with quivering lips. "You know I did not mean that, Arthur."

"Forgive me," he said, throwing his arm round her waist. "I did not wish to pain you, Eva, but I too, have my serious thoughts this morning."

After that he roused himself with an effort and drew such a ridiculous sketch of Miss Minerva Lexicon's horror and amazement upon discovering the absence of both student and drawing master, that Eva was compelled to laugh at it, and to dismiss all gloomy fears and forebodings.

An hour later they were made man and wife, in a little whitewashed village church, by an old clergyman, who took everything for granted, and asked no questions.

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Kneeling there, before the altar, with the sun streaming in through the one stained-glass window upon the quaint monumental effigies, Eva Burlington gave herself to the man who had won her love, fully conscious of the solemn, binding nature of the oath she was taking, which, unfortunately, is not the case with all brides.

When they had signed the register, and shaken hands with the clergyman, they got into the dog-cart again, and drove off, Eva very subdued and thoughtful.

"It must have been my fancy," she said, placing her hand upon her husband's sleeve; "but I thought I heard you mention three names instead of two, at the altar, Arthur, only I could not catch the last. Was it fancy?"

"Of course," he replied promptly. "My name is Arthur Glyndon, short and concise. A plain man doesn't require three names in making his way through the world, does he? What a fanciful little goose it is!"

"And now we are going straight to my father!" she said, interrogatively. "His last letter was addressed from the Fountain Hotel, Scarborough. Oh, I hope he is still there—that we shall find him at once, and get it over."

A shadow rested upon Arthur Glyndon's handsome face, and he made his bride no immediate reply.

At that moment he was feeling afraid of her—yes, actually afraid of her. The fair, girlish creature in the dove-coloured dress and straw-hat trimmed with a wreath of wild roses now sitting beside him, striving to read his face with her clear, candid eyes, was stronger than he by virtue of her innocence, her unsuspecting trust and love.

He was her hero now, her king, but a few hours later and she would turn away from him in shuddering surprise and wounded, outraged love, to seek refuge, perhaps, in her father's arms, if they were still open to her.

Rather than open her eyes to the bitter truth—rather than stab her to the heart in so doing and forfeit her love, which had become so precious to him—Arthur Glyndon was willing, nay, eager, to forego his cherished scheme of vengeance against Ralph Burlington, but it was not to be. He had set forces in motion which he was powerless to check or control.

"Eva, darling!" he said gently, "will you for my sake relinquish this idea of going at once to your father, to inform him of our marriage? I have a reason—an important one—in making this request to you. Let us wait a month or two, going to Folkestone for the present, instead of Scarborough. Do, for my sake, consent!"

Eva burst into a storm of tears.

"Oh, Arthur! you—you promised to take me to him!" she sobbed, reproachfully. "Think how unhappy and anxious he will be when Miss Minerva sends to tell him that I am missing—that I have run away? I must go to him and ask him to forgive me if I am to enjoy any peace of mind. Why should you so much dread meeting him?"

"I dread the interview less on my own account than yours," said Glyndon. "Did you leave a note behind you, or not, at the college?"

"Yes; I left a note on my dressing-table, addressed to Miss Minerva."

"And in it you stated that you were about to marry me?"

"Yes."

"My name alone will suffice to reveal everything to him," muttered Glyndon. "He will soon be on our track. Better to face him at once than to postpone the evil day. And yet, Heaven only knows how I am to bear the sight of her misery, which I shall have caused! You insist upon going straight to your father then, Eva?" he said sadly. "You will not be guided by me?"

"Not in this matter. I must and will see him without delay. Don't be angry with me,

Arthur," she pleaded. "for being so wilful. In everything else I will obey you blindly, but I cannot allow him to remain in suspense and anxiety!"

"Very well, you shall go to him," said Glyndon; "only remember, Eva, if the interview causes you lasting pain and unhappiness, that I implored you not to go. Remember, also, whatever my original motive may have been in wooing you, that I love you dearly now. For Heaven's sake, remember that!"

"What do you mean? What is it that you fear?" she asked, wonderingly.

"You will know ere long," he said unsatisfactorily, as the dog-cart stopped in front of the country station, and, jumping down himself, he helped her to alight. "Just one kiss, love, there is no one looking, and this is our wedding-day. Let us make the most of it while it lasts!"

## CHAPTER V.

ARTHUR GLYNDON had kept himself well posted up in the movements of Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome during his stay at Leamington.

He knew it was then performing at Scarborough, hence the paternal letter dated from the Fountain Hotel which Eva had lately received.

The newly-married pair had a carriage to themselves right throughout the journey. More than once Arthur Glyndon was on the point of making a full confession to his young wife as they went along, instead of waiting until he stood face to face with her father.

But his courage failed him ere he could utter the self-incriminating words. For the first time in his chequered career Glyndon was guilty of cowardice.

Had it been a man in question he would not have shrunk from the ordeal, however painful; but a girl, and that girl his wife, loving him passionately, trusting him blindly, how could he undeceive her and reveal his own duplicity, the evil motive that had first drawn him towards her?

In the face of such a revelation concerning the past dare he hope that she would believe in his present love for her, which, Heaven knows, was genuine enough? Would not indignation and distrust supersede every warmer feeling in her breast towards him?

When they reached Scarborough she was still in blissful ignorance respecting her husband's antecedents and his lately severed connection with her father.

She felt both surprised and sorry, though, when she heard Glyndon tell the cabman to take them to the Harp instead of the Fountain Hotel.

"Why not let us stay at the same hotel with papa?" she asked, quickly. "I should so much prefer it, Arthur."

"Oh, I always stay at the Harp when I pay a flying visit to Scarborough," he replied, leaning back in the cab, his face well in the shade. "It's—it's a comfortable house, Eva, and I don't know much of the Fountain. Perhaps it will be as well for us not to give your father too much of our society at first—to throw ourselves at his head, as it were, by selecting the same hotel."

"I hope he is still here," said the girl, earnestly, her little hands clasped upon her lap, her eyes full of suspenseful yearning. "When once we have seen him and told him all the worst will be over. Oh, he must forgive us! He could not harden his heart against us for long, however angry he may be at first, could he, Archie?"

"I don't suppose Mr. Burlington will refuse to forgive you, dear," was the evasive reply.

"Well then, since we are one now, Archie, the forgiveness must include you as well," said Eva, laughing nervously at her own little joke.

It was evening when they found themselves safely landed at their hotel, and the various places of amusement then delighting Scar-

borough, among others Burlington's Hippodrome, would soon be opening their doors.

As soon as the newly-married pair had dined, Eva by this time in a state of repressed excitement almost unbearable—expressed a wish to go to her father.

"Why not wait until to-morrow?" suggested Glyndon, aware that Ralph Burlington must ere now have left the hotel for the circus.

"No, no! I would far rather get the interview over," said Eva, imploringly; "and at once. Miss Lexicon may have sent him a telegram, and, if so, how miserable he must be feeling. How wicked and deceitful he must deem me! Dear Archie, please take me to him without any delay. If I were only quite sure that he is still at the Fountain Hotel!"

"He is!" said Glyndon, curtly. "I have already ascertained that!"

"Oh, I am so glad!" she exclaimed, "that removes one fear, and for the rest—well, I cannot imagine papa being angry with me. From him I have met with nothing but love and tenderness. Archie, you foolish fellow, I believe you positively dread meeting your father-in-law."

"I dread nothing but the loss of your love, Eva, my wife, my darling!" he said, hoarsely.

"The loss of my love!" she repeated, in all amazement. "Why, Arthur, you cannot know what you are saying. I could not help loving you were I to try. If you were to break my heart, its last beat would be full of love for you. I am not one of those women who love to order, as it were—whom a little thing can render cold and unforgiving. You are part of myself, and naught save death can ever come between us."

Her liquid hazel eyes were raised to his as she spoke, full of sweet tremulous lovelight, and implicit confidence in the man of her choice.

Stooping down abruptly Arthur Glyndon crushed the warm golden hair against his cheek, and raised kisses upon his girl-bride's lovely face.

Her clinging, passionate devotion was already becoming his sorest punishment. He had gained the treasure only to lose it.

"You wish to see your father to-night; you will not even wait until to-morrow, Eva?" he said, miserably.

"No, let us go at once. A painful thing should never be deferred, and he will not prove half so formidable as you imagine."

Without a word he prepared to accompany her.

"It is not far from here," he said, as they quitted the hotel. "I know the way, and we can easily walk."

Ten minutes brought them to the circus, with its numerous outbuildings. Eva glanced at her husband in mute inquiry.

"We shall find your father inside," he said.

"In the circus? Had we better not wait until he comes out, and let the interview take place at his hotel? Arthur," grasping his arm convulsively, as her eyes rested upon the scarlet and gold letters over the principal entrance, gaily advertising "Burlington's Royal Circus, and Hippodrome," "What is the meaning of that? It is my name and papa's."

"Eva, there is a double surprise in store for you, poor child, and a very sad one," he said, compassionately, wishing—oh! how vainly—his own vengeful work undone. "I ought to have prepared you for it, but I lacked the courage. Your father has deceived you, with regard to his social status. He is simply Ralph Burlington, the proprietor of the largest travelling circus throughout England. His birth under Government never existed, save in his own imagination."

She turned so pale that he feared she was about to faint. There was more strength in her nature, however, than he had given her credit for.

"My father a circus-proprietor!" she said blankly, "not a gentleman of possessed of ample means!"

allowed me to grow up under such a false impression—to fill such a false position?"

"Your mother was a lady," he explained, briefly; "and your father wished you to be under no disadvantage in society as you grew up, owing to his profession. I believe his motive in deceiving you was a kindly one."

"You knew," she faltered, "and yet you did not tell me."

"I had my reasons for remaining silent. Eva, after this you will not seek to see your father to-night amidst his professional surroundings—you could not bear it."

"Yes, I will see him," she persisted. "I must accustom myself to the truth. Oh! if he had not hidden it from me so long!"

Surprised at the self-possession which high-bredding enabled her to evince under such painful circumstances, in mortal dread of the revelation, the disclosure closely affecting himself, yet awaiting her, Arthur Glyndon drew his wife's arm through his arm, and led her towards the circus-tent.

As they entered it by a side door a large ferocious ugly bulldog belonging to Ralph Burlington, came running towards them. Eva shrank back in affright.

"Don't be afraid, miss," said a groom who happened to be passing at the time. "Tom won't hurt you; he's thorough bred, and a well-bred dawg is like a well-bred man, for the matter of that. He knows how to behave himself in genteel company, and he knows how to take care of himself when anybody interferes with him. Why!" recognising Eva's escort, "blest if it ain't Mr. Glyndon come back again! Glad to see you, sir."

This unexpected recognition of her husband by one of the circus people caused Eva a fresh pang of surprise and terror. What could be the meaning of it all? she asked herself wildly. Was everyone in league to cheat and deceive her?

She felt sick and giddy, almost uncertain as to her own identity as Glyndon led her along the dim, draughty, circular passage.

Ere she could question him anew a curtain screening one of the entrances to the ring was raised, admitting a stream of light, and a boy in acrobat's dress came out, having finished his performance, closely followed by a tall man in ordinary tweed clothing.

"Three times to-night you contrived to blunder, young man," said Ralph Burlington, savagely, boxing the boy's ears until they rang again. "You're fit for nothing but a penny show at a fair. Be a little more careful to-morrow, or I'll make you smart for it—dy'e hear?"

As the boy ran past her, sobbing, Eva regarded his assailant, whom she had not recognised, with flashing, indignant eyes. Then, as Ralph Burlington turned sharply round, she uttered a low-voiced exclamation—it was her father!

Desirous of shielding her if he could, Arthur Glyndon stepped forward,

"Hullo, Glyndon!" exclaimed the circus-proprietor, half defiantly, yet not without a conciliatory ring in his voice. "So, you've thought better of it, and come back to us again, have you?"

After her trainer's abrupt departure Lady Jane had refused her food, and gone through her performance very badly indeed with a total stranger. Ralph Burlington regretted this the more since Lady Jane's "business" had always been a favourite feature with the audience. If Glyndon liked to overlook that blow and join on again, why—he might.

"I have brought my wife with me," said Glyndon, his voice sounding strange and hard. "She wished to see you, Mr. Burlington, otherwise I should not have been here to-night."

"Your wife, eh!" repeated Ralph Burlington, glancing in Eva's direction. "So you ran away to get married, did you? Is the lady a professional? If so I may be able to offer her an engagement."

"Father!"

Eva uttered the one word as she

stepped forward and confronted him. It was enough, however. The swarthy hue forsook Ralph Burlington's face; he staggered back against a wooden partition, his whip falling from his hand.

"Eva! Good heavens! What brings you here?" he gasped.

"I wanted to ask your forgiveness," she replied mournfully, "for having married without your consent. I did not expect to find you thus, to be so suddenly enlightened with regard to your real profession, father. It—it overcame me a little at first. I wish you had not concealed the truth from me so long. Oh father," as he remained silent, staring blankly at her, "you will not refuse to forgive me for leaving the college and becoming Mr. Glyndon's wife. We were married only this morning."

"His wife!" repeated Ralph Burlington in low, hoarse tones, grasping his daughter's wrist as he spoke; "did I hear you aright? His wife?"

"Yes."

Like a wild beast in its fury the circumstantial master turned upon Arthur Glyndon.

"You villain, oh! you villain!" he gasped.

"So this is your revenge?"

"Call it what you like," said Glyndon, sternly, "but spare her. I alone am to blame for what has occurred. She is my wife; nothing can alter that fact, Ralph Burlington!"

"Arthur—father!" exclaimed the terrified girl. "You know each other! What is this about revenge? Oh! tell me the meaning of it all, or I shall lose my reason!"

The unusual scene, the sound of voices, had attracted many of the *artistes* belonging to the circus to the spot. They were listening wide-eyed and open-mouthed to the exciting, highly-interesting conversation being carried on. Jimmy Waters was there, and the acrobats, and Mdlle. Montmorenci, with several young ladies airily attired for riding in the ring, not to mention the performing dogs in scarlet coats and little cocked hats. Not to such a motley audience had Eva Burlington expected to relate the story of her wooing.

"Eva, what do you know of this man you have married?" demanded Ralph Burlington. "Unhappy girl, how did he first become acquainted with you?"

"At the college. He has been drawing master there for the last five months," she replied, wondering why Arthur remained so silent, standing there with bowed head and folded arms. "You—you do not know anything against him, father, save his poverty, which he told me of before we were married? You will forgive us both, since we love each other so well."

"Love!" exclaimed Burlington, the veins in his forehead swelling as if they would burst. "Disobedient, wilful girl, you need no sorer punishment than that which you have brought upon yourself in marrying that man. I see it all. He sought you out—by what means I cannot tell—and made you his wife in order that he might be revenged upon me. Six months ago he was in my employ as a professional. He proved insolent and incompetent, words passed between us, and I struck him. He disappeared that night, vowing vengeance against me; but I little thought what shape it would take. To marry you, to bring you here, to ruin your life and all my hopes connected with it—the villain! I could kill him where he stands! He married you for hate—not love!"

A cry broke from the girl's lips, the agony in her brown eyes as she raised them to her husband's face he never forgot.

"Arthur—tell me—is this true?" she asked, brokenly.

"Listen to my version of the matter before you condemn me, Eva," he said, imploringly. "It is true that—although a gentleman by birth and education—I had fallen low enough to accept an engagement with your father. It is not true that I proved either insolent or incompetent. He disliked me for some reason,

and he treated me with the utmost coarseness and brutality.

"A small debt I had contracted gave him additional power over me. At last he struck me, while retaining possession of the valuable horse which enabled me to gain a living. I could bear no more—I left him.

"While my passion was at its height someone informed me of your existence—of the manner in which you had been brought up to consider yourself a lady, well connected, of your father's exceeding love for you.

"I determined, if possible, to punish him for the misery he had inflicted upon me through his child. I went to Leamington with the idea of winning you and making you my wife, irrespective of what you might be like in person or disposition; bent only on revenge. But that did not last. I grew to love you for yourself alone, as I had never loved any woman before. Your beauty and gentleness aroused my better nature. I could not resounce you then.

"At this moment I solemnly declare that you are unspeakably dear to me, Eva. For your sake—to spare you this disclosure—I was even willing to forego my cherished scheme of reparation. Remember how, only this morning, I implored you not to come here, but you insisted, and I had to give way.

"Eva, if I have sinned grievously against you it was under terrible provocation, and since I have bitterly repented. If everything else about me is false my love for you is genuine. Darling, you will forgive me, you must!"

He strove to take her hand, but she withdrew it hastily from him.

"My heart is broken!" she moaned, then fell fainting at her father's feet.

Ralph Burlington raised her hastily, while the women present applied restoratives. Then, as soon as a cab could be fetched, he went away in it with his daughter to the Fountain Hotel, Arthur Glyndon making no attempt to follow them.

He returned to his hotel a miserable man, while tongues wagged freely at the circus, discussing the romantic incident, pitying Eva, blaming Glyndon, yet holding Ralph Burlington responsible for what had occurred.

And Ralph? He sat by his daughter's couch, divided between passionate anger, and sorrow rendered none the less bitter through the consciousness that he had treated Glyndon very badly once.

In return, all his love-prompted deceit had been exposed, his plans for his only child's future hopelessly destroyed.

She was Glyndon's wife, curse him! and Glyndon was a beggar. The shock to Eva contained in the double disclosure had been a terrible one.

For a girl, priding herself upon her good lineage, reared amidst aristocratic surroundings and acquaintances, to learn that her father was only a circus-proprietor, her husband a professional lately in his employ, was, to say the least of it, overwhelming.

Yet her love had suffered even more than her pride. Arthur Glyndon, in spite of the deceit he had practised, was dear to her as ever.

It was the assertion proceeding from her father that hatred, not love, had induced him to marry her which had wounded her most. Could she but have believed Arthur Glyndon, when he swore that he loved her dearly, half the sting would have been taken from her trouble at once.

"Are you angry with me, father?" she whispered, drawing his face down to hers. After all he was her father, and she had experienced nothing but love and kindness from him.

"Not with you, child," was the reply, "but with him. You were so young, so ignorant of the world, Eva, and you had no mother to guide you. I wanted you brought up as a lady; that is why you were not allowed to know anything about the circus. And he has ruined all

my plans ! Let him keep away from me, or I shall kill him, Eva !

She shuddered convulsively.

"Father, you must not say that," she protested, earnestly. "I love him—I love him as dearly as ever. It may be wrong and foolish, but I cannot help it. If anything should happen to Arthur—to my husband—it would kill me. Oh ! if I could but feel certain that he loves me, ever so little, in return !"

And Ralph Burlington, perceiving how thoroughly Glyndon had the girl's happiness in his keeping, hated his son-in-law more fiercely than ever.

## CHAPTER VI.

ARTHUR GLYNDON, pacing moodily up and down his room at the Harp Hotel, alone upon his wedding night, was hardly a man to be envied.

He had avenged himself fully upon Ralph Burlington for past insults, and yet of the two men perhaps Arthur Glyndon was the more miserable that night.

He enjoyed his triumph over the circus-proprietor so much that presently, tired of walking to and fro, he flung himself into a chair by the table and buried his face in his hands, great, tearless sobs shaking him from head to foot as he thought over it.

"Oh, Eva, my wife, my darling ! if to-night's work could but be undone !" he exclaimed, miserably. "It has turned your love for me into hatred—your joy into lasting sorrow. That look as you shrank away from me—shall I ever forget it ? It will haunt me to my dying day in its agony of wounded love and dawning horror. And he, your father, will do his utmost to blacken me in your sight, to widen the gulf already yawning wide between us. But I cannot, I will not, give you up without another effort to win your forgiveness, to regain your love. Apart from your existence would be well-nigh undurable. Eva, you must, you shall forgive me yet !"

He went to bed with the firm intention of obtaining an interview with his young wife upon the morrow, no matter what obstacles her father might place in the way, and pleading his own cause.

He would implore her to return to him, to judge him less severely, to afford him an opportunity of atoning for that wrong act recently committed.

Surely his great love ought to carry some weight with it, and induce her to forgive him ? If she refused, well, in that case, he would leave England—never to return.

Arthur Glyndon had fallen into an uneasy dream-haunted slumber when a loud shouting below in the street caused him to spring up quickly and rush to the window.

There was a dull red glare in the sky about half-a-mile away, as it seemed to him, while columns of smoke were rising above the houses in that direction.

Dressing himself hurriedly Arthur Glyndon went downstairs. It was two o'clock in the morning, yet everyone at the Harp was astir. Those terrible cries of "Fire ! Fire !" the ringing of the alarm-bell, and the rumble of the fire engine as it dashed by on its way to the scene of conflagration, had drawn them all from their beds like magi.

"Where is the fire ?" asked Glyndon, of a coatless waiter, still half-asleep.

"Not quite sure, sir ; but I believe it's at the Fountain Hotel," replied the carpet-trotter. "The boots has gone to make inquiries, and—"

But ere he could finish his sentence Arthur Glyndon had started off like a madman in the direction of the Fountain, leaving the waiter staring after him open-mouthed.

The Fountain on fire, and the woman he loved staying there with her father ! A sickening dread lest she should be in danger took possession of Glyndon as he tore through the streets intervening between him and the hotel.

Until that moment he had not realised how unspeakably dear and precious his girl-wife was to him.

Confusion dire confounded awaited him at the Fountain. It was a very large hotel, and at the first alarm of fire the visitors staying in it had hurried down to the hall in every possible variety of costume.

Many had left such trifles as hair and teeth upstairs in the privacy of their own rooms. One gentleman had descended airily clad in his night-shirt and a dress coat which he had caught up as the first thing that came to hand.

The fire had broken out in one of the corridors, and was steadily gaining ground. The great staircase would soon be impassable, the firemen's strenuous efforts hardly seemed to tell upon the flames.

Amidst the mob of visitors and servants assembled in the hall, ready to rush out should the fire spread, Arthur Glyndon searched in vain for Eva.

Pushing in amongst the half-demented men and women he ran against Ralph Burlington in the act of making frantic inquiries about his daughter.

He could not discover from anyone the number of her room, or the corridor in which it was situated.

"Eva ! Good heavens ! where is she ?" shouted Glyndon in his ear.

"She has not come down with the rest," cried Ralph, wildly, forgetful of all save his child's peril. "And none of these fools can tell me which is her room. Presently, it will be too late to save her !"

"Is she here in her own name or mine ?" asked Glyndon, grasping the maddened man by the arm.

"Her own."

"Miss Burlington's room," he said, loudly, making his voice heard above the surrounding din. "Does anyone here know the number of it ?"

"Number 57, third corridor," replied a frightened chambermaid.

A groan burst from Ralph Burlington's lips.

"It's next to the one on fire," he exclaimed, making a dash for the smoke-wreathed staircase ; "but I'll save her, or perish in the attempt."

"It's certain death," cried a dozen voices, while a dozen hands held him back, "You must not go."

"No, but I will," said Arthur Glyndon, ere the circus-proprietor could shake off his friendly detainers. "The right is mine, Burlington," clutching his hand for a second ; "I'll save Eva, or die with her, as a man should do when his wife is in question."

Ere they could prevent him doing so Glyndon had rushed up the staircase, and become lost to sight amidst the smoke that enshrouded it.

His eyes pricked and smarted terribly, little tongues of flame darted through the smoke at him as he went. The firemen, some of whom were inside the building, playing upon the flames, called after him, warningly, as he hurried past them, but Glyndon took no heed.

The entrance to the third corridor was fairly alight. Dashing through the smoke and flame, a water-saturated handkerchief over his mouth and nostrils, Glyndon entered it, calling loudly upon Eva. There was a little more air here, but the gas had gone out, and the numbers upon the doors undistinguishable.

To his delight, a door half way down the corridor opened suddenly, and Eva's voice responded to his call.

Clad in her dressing-gown, her golden hair falling around her in shining waves, she ran out to meet her husband.

"Oh, Arthur ! save me, save me !" she cried, clinging wildly to him in her fright.

"I came on purpose," he said coolly, in the attempt to reassure her. "There is no time to be lost," he continued, snatching a blanket from the bed and wrapping it round her.

"Your father ! oh, he is all right, downstairs with the rest. He wanted to come after you, but I chose to come myself. Now, Eva, shut your eyes, and trust yourself wholly to me."

He hurried her towards the entrance to the corridor, but a choking volume of smoke and flame drove them back again. Even in that short time the stairs had become impassable, and the corridor, burning fiercely at one end, a perfect trap in which they were imprisoned.

"We are too late—we must try the window," said Glyndon, going back to Eva's room ; "it is the only chance now."

The room looked upon a side street, and it was about thirty-seven feet from the ground. Eva stood there in silence, watching her husband with fascinated eyes, as, after shutting the door to keep out as much smoke as possible, he tore down the blind cords, and knotted the bedclothes together to form a rope.

"Arthur, what are you going to do ?" she asked presently.

"I am going to lower you and myself from this window," he replied, still working hard at his rope ; "since the fire-escape does not seem at all likely to turn up in time. It is not half so dangerous as you think for, Eva. You have only to cling to me like grim death, and the thing is done."

"You have imperilled your own life in the attempt to save mine," she said, speaking quietly, in spite of her terror.

"That is not much for a man who loves his wife as I love you to do," was the rejoinder. "Ah !" regretfully. "I thought it wasn't long enough. Stay here, Eva. I'm only going into the next room."

He went, and returned again a'most directly, with more blind cords and a great heap of bedclothes. Having finished his rope, he attached one end of it firmly to the bars of the grate, then going to the window, flung it wide open, and paid his rope out carefully.

A roar of many voices floated up to him, but he paid no heed to it. Cool and collected as ever, he wrapped the blanket tightly round his young wife's trembling form, then tied her to him by means of the window cords.

"Put your arms round my neck, and don't look down," he said briefly. "Eva," with a sudden change of tone, "have you forgiven me ? Do you believe now in the sincerity of my love ? If they are the last words that I am ever to utter in this world I tell you that I love you. Had I loved you less I should have refused to allow you to marry me when it came to the point ; but I could not give you up—you had grown so dear to me. Do you credit me with speaking the truth—now ?"

"Yes," she murmured, the knowledge of his love affording her intense joy even in that supreme moment. "I shall never doubt your love again. It is mine, and mine alone !"

"And—darling—I am forgiven ?"

Her lips were pressed to his by way of reply.

"I was never angry with you, Arthur, only grieved and fearful lest you had married me from vengeful motives only. Now that I am sure of your love I care for nothing else. I feel brave and strong."

He kissed her again as they stood upon the window-sill, and bade her remember his instructions. The flames were leaping out from the windows below as they began their perilous descent.

"At least we shall die together," whispered the girl, hiding her pale face upon his breast. "Oh ! Arthur, you have no blanket round you !"

"It would prevent me from using my arms," he replied, with a glad sense of victory already gained. "Hold tight, little woman. Now !"

Hand over hand, sailor fashion, Arthur Glyndon went down his improvised rope, which bore its double burden well.

It was a fearful descent, anxiously watched by those below. The smoke and flame seemed to swallow them up occasionally.

Eva, protected by the blanket, suffered less. Arthur Glyndon could hardly avoid loosing his hold of the rope now and then, in the pain he

endured, while the dread last it should be burnt through ere they reached the ground was uppermost in his mind.

Only a few minutes, yet they seemed like so many ages, fraught with awful peril and suspense, while two human beings passed through a burning fiery furnace on their way to life and safety.

Only a few minutes, yet as long as they lived Arthur and Eva Glyndon never forgot them.

Two tall ladders had been placed against the side of the hotel. A man was mounted on each, ready to aid Glyndon as soon as he came within reach with his burden.

A roar from the crowd greeted them as they slowly descended, supporting the half-insensible forms between them.

Their escape had not been effected a moment too soon. Already flames were bursting from the window of Eva's room.

Ralph Burlington, who had witnessed the descent, cut the cords that bound his daughter to Arthur Glyndon, and clasped her in his arms.

She had fainted through fright. Otherwise, save for being slightly singed and blackened, she had escaped uninjured, thanks to the protecting blanket.

Arthur Glyndon, however, was badly burnt. The trio had not reached the Harp Hotel ere the fire-escape arrived, too late to assist Glyndon and Eva in escaping, but not too late to aid others, who, through delaying too long, had found the staircase impassable.

As soon as Eva recovered consciousness she sat up and asked for her husband.

"He is being looked after upstairs," said Ralph Burlington.

"Is he badly hurt?" she cried, fearfully.

"Severely, I believe, but not dangerously," replied her father. "The doctor is dressing his wounds now. It is not necessary for you to go to him, Eva."

"Not necessary!" she repeated. "Father, can you forget that he has just proved his love for me by saving my life?"

"But for his unpardonable conduct you would not have been placed in any danger," said Ralph Burlington, with pitiless logic.

His feelings towards Arthur were of a mixed nature. He was still furiously angry with him for having married his daughter and ruined all his plans for her future, while he could but experience some gratitude, since Glyndon had saved Eva's life at the risk of his own.

The next few days were spent by Eva, at her husband's bed-side. Arthur Glyndon's burns gave him severe pain; yet the reconciliation effected by means of the fire between himself and his girl-bride more than compensated him for all his sufferings. To have Eva with him, nursing and waiting upon him, to know that he had regained her love and confidence, was blissful to him. She had heard the worst, and still they were together!

A few days afterwards a dapper little man called, introduced himself as a solicitor, and informed Glyndon of the death of his cousins, adding,—

"Their decease places you in possession of both title and estate," said the solicitor; "as next-of-kin. You are Lord Ormsby, with an income of something like thirty thousand a year."

"Lord Ormsby!" echoed Eva, while Ralph Burlington clung to the rail at the foot of the bed to support himself. The news had made him giddy.

"Not bad that for a circus *artiste*, eh, Eva?" said Glyndon, looking up at his young wife tenderly. "Sorry as I am for my cousins, I am glad to have something worth offering you at last, my darling. The title your father coveted for you and the fortune will both be yours as my wife!"

"I cannot understand!" she exclaimed, confusedly. "It is all so strange and unexpected!"

Ralph Burlington remained silent.

"Let me explain," Arthur went on. "My

real name is or was Arthur Glyndon Fitzgerald. My father was the younger son of a peer. Both he and my mother died when I was a child. I dropped the Fitzgerald after getting into a row at college, and being cut by my family. Since then I have led a wild, adventurous life, with no private source of income to fall back upon. I was very hard-up, indeed, when I joined your troupe, Burlington. But for the untimely death of my cousins I should have remained hard-up to the end of the chapter—for they would never have helped me. Now that I am in a position to gratify your ambition with regard to your daughter, will you shake hands and consent to let by-gones be by-gones?"

Ralph Burlington did shake hands, but in rather a shame-faced fashion.

Lord and Lady Ormsby had not long been established at Ormsby Park ere Burlington's Royal Circus and Hippodrome became a thing of the past. In deference to his son-in-law's wishes Ralph disposed of it. He visits his daughter occasionally—he has the good sense not to come too often—and he is always made welcome by Arthur for his wife's sake. Riches and their responsibilities have sobered Lord Ormsby; and he fills his exalted position well, his beautiful wife—thanks to her superior education—ably seconding him.

They are popular throughout the county; are actually in love with each other still, while Lady Jane, enjoying a comfortable stall in the Ormsby stables, is a great pet with the boys and girls springing up around them as the years go by.

[THE END.]

## FACETIE.

A SMOKE-STACK.—A package of cigarettes.

A VOLUME OF SMOKE—The history of Sheffield.

BLUEBEARD'S trade was evidently that of a belle hanger.

The man who sows toffy seldom reaps a crop of sugar-cane.

"I THINK I catch your drift," as the man remarked when the avalanche fell from the eaves far above him.

To stand well in the eyes of the ladies it is only necessary to give them your seat in a street-car.

OLD-bachelor patient: "Doctor, I feel miserable in mind and body. What shall I take?" Doctor (gruffly): "Take a wife."

"WHATEVER you do, my boy, begin at the bottom and work up."—"But, father, suppose I was going to dig a well?"

MAUD (gushingly): Oh! Clara, my dear, do look at my engagement ring! Won't all the girls be dying of envy? Actually three solitaires!"

"I BELIEVE in everything in moderation," said Crimsonbeak to his wife, at breakfast. "Yes; I notice you believe in taking sleep in that way," replied his wife, who heard him writing with the night-key at 3 A.M.

LANDLADY (examining a fugitive boarder's trunk): "Why, Bridget, his trunk is full of bricks! How could they have got there?" "Sure, ma'am, he brought one home in his hat every night."

"I SEE," said Brown, "that they now say that beef-tea is worthless as an article of food. But for all that, it was the only thing that saved my life when I had the fever." Fogg: "Yes; but how does that prove that beef-tea is not worthless?"

MISTRESS: "Good gracious; Why, Babette, what have you been doing with this chair?" Servant-maid: "You see, ma'am, the cat kept going on it and tearing the plush; so I spread some mustard on the seat, and now she lets it a-be."

If every man was as big as he feels, there wouldn't be standing room in this country.

PATTI's favourite colour is red, but she also admires green. She thinks the American bank-note has such a lovely shade.

The change in a dog's eye as he goes from light to darkness, or vice-versa, occupies three seconds. This is the time when you want to jump the picket fence.

BROWN to JONES: "I say, lend me a dollar until to-morrow. You see I changed my vest this morning." Jones: "I'm sorry, but I've just invested my change."

SHE (to Jack, who is gazing into a coffee-cup): "I see, Jack, you are again building castles in Spain." He: "Oh, no, my dear! Only surveying my grounds in Java."

ORGANIST: "As your party marches down the aisle I will play some impressive march." Prospective bridegroom: "That's good, but be particular about the key." Organist: "Oh, certainly! I invariably play wedding-marches in B-flat. Two flats seem so appropriate."

"GEORGE," said the senior partner to the junior, in a law-firm of three, "I thought you told me that Alfred had gone out of town on legal business? I understand he's down the road on a visit to a young lady." "Well, sir," said George, with an injured look, "it's not illegal to call on a young lady, I believe?"

WIFE (returning from matinée): "Oh, it was too lovely! She had on a pale nile-green silk, with bands of passementerie down the front and the grandest diamonds you ever saw; and when she died, in the last act, she rolled over four times, and every woman in the house was crying. I never enjoyed a play so much in my life."

LAWYER: "Now, Uncle Zeke, you heard those two explosions. Was one right after the other?" Uncle Zeke: "Yes, sir." Lawyer: "Now will you swear that one didn't occur before the other?" Uncle Zeke: "Yes, sir, deed I will. I were dar, an' he'd 'em."

COUNTRYMAN: "You did not stay long in London after your long absence?" Londoner: "No; I am a sort of an Enoch Arden, I am." "Well, well, went home, found your wife had married again, and came quietly away? I deeply—" "It wasn't just that. I left because I found she hadn't married again."

PHOTOGRAPHER's boy: "No, ma'am; we never take pictures, unless we get pay for them in advance." Old maid: "But suppose I pay for them and don't like them?" "Don't know, ma'am; the boss is out, but he'll be in soon an' will tell you." "Seems to me a very queer rule. You ought, at least, to guarantee satisfaction." "Yes; but you see, ma'am, there ain't no way to keep pictures from looking like the people."

PAINFULLY SURPRISED.—One of the swell young men who appeared in the street the other day arrayed in the new-fashioned cape-overcoat was halted by a pedestrian, who hurriedly said: "Say, if you are coachman to get the fat lady who went into that shop you'd better get your big round as soon as possible, for she's fainted away, and there's half-a-dozen clerks out looking for you." The swell young man had no good place to drop on, and so he leaned against a telegraph pole until the shivers had ceased running up and down his spine.

HE HAD TO "GIT."—They had the pavement in Park-street torn up from curb to curb the other day when a potato pedlar's horse and cart came rushing along. The repairers shouted to the driver to stop, but he would not, and horse and wagon were rushed over the loose blocks and through the ditch to the solid road beyond. "You must be in an awful hurry," remarked one of the paviours to the pedlar as he was gathering for a fresh start. "You bet I am." "Anything special?" "Well, I sold a woman back here three pecks of potatoes for a bushel; and if there's any git in this horse, the next ten minutes is the time to show it."

## SOCIETY.

There is some talk, says *Modern Society*, of the Princess of Wales following the Prince to the Riviera next month, as her sister, the Empress of Russia, in charge of her delicate son, will shortly be going to Nice for several weeks' sojourn. Such a trip could but be highly beneficial to the Princess and strengthen her for the forthcoming trying season. Of late Her Royal Highness has looked pinched and pale, as if wanting blood and warmth—a condition of body which we should judge arises from the fact that the Princess eats no meats, except such as have had their juices cooked out of them.

LORD AND LADY BRABOURNE have been recently entertaining their friends and neighbours most pleasantly at their mansion, The Paddock, Smeth. The company staying at the house witnessed the first performance of two pieces selected by an amateur caste. A ball followed the theatricals, which were repeated, when a very large number of residents in the neighbourhood were invited.

A pretty stage was erected in a large room adjoining the billiard-room. Emblazoned in front of the stage were the letters "V.R." and it was brilliantly illuminated by footlights. The first piece on the programme was Slingsby Laurence's domestic comedy, "A Cosy Couple," in which Mr. Dormouse was taken by the Hon. Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen, and Mrs. Dormouse by the Hon. Eva Knatchbull-Hugessen. Mary by Miss Geraldine Robertson, and Tom Russelton by Mr. White Thomson. The acting called forth repeated plaudits, and each of the performers was called forward on the fall of the curtain. The second piece was William Brough's "Trying It On," in which the part of Mr. Jobstek was taken by Lord Brabourne with rare humour. After supper, as it was nearing midnight, Lady Brabourne went to the piano, and the company joined in singing the carol "Good Night to the Old Year."

A PRETTY wedding was that of Mr. Bonville Bradley Fox, of Brislington House, son of the late Francis Fox, Esq., to Miss Annie Danger, youngest daughter of the late Thomas Danger, Esq., of Gotley House, Brislington, which took place at Brislington church. The officiating clergymen were the Rev. Richard Howell Taylor, rector of Kemball, and the Rev. John Lindsay, vicar of Brislington. The Dean of Westminster, uncle to the bridegroom, who had intended to conduct the marriage service, was prevented through illness from being present.

The bride was given away by her brother, Mr. L. C. Danger, and wore ivory faille Francaise, with petticoat embroidered in iridescent beads, and trimmed with lace. Her train was borne by her two little nieces, in frocks of crimson plush, with hats to match; and she was accompanied by four bridesmaids, who wore dresses of cream silk and lace, trimmed with pale pink plush, bonnets à la suite, and carried bouquets of white and pink flowers. Each bridesmaid wore a fly brooch, the gift of the bridegroom.

Mr. Hindmarsh was the best man. At the conclusion of the wedding ceremony the whole party adjourned to Gotley House, where Mrs. Danger had a reception, and amongst those present were the Hon. Mrs. C. E. Fox, Colonel and Mrs. Alexander, Dr. and Mrs. Fox, the Misses Fox, Mr. and Mrs. Whitterop, &c. In the evening the bride and bridegroom started for London, en route for the South Coast. The bride's travelling dress was composed of brown cloth, trimmed with beaver, with bonnet, muff, and mantle to match.

It is reported that the Queen has consented to visit Birmingham in the course of the present year for the purpose of laying the foundation-stone of the new law courts to be erected in Corporation-street. The date and details of Her Majesty's visit have not yet been finally arranged.

## STATISTICS.

GERMANY has 23,000 miles of underground telegraph wires, and France 7,200, all in successful operation.

There are 172 specimens of blind creatures known to science, including crayfish, myriapods, &c. They are mostly white, whether from lack of stimulus of the light, or from bleaching out of the skin. Some species have small eyes and some have none.

SUNDAY PICTURE EXHIBITIONS.—There was again a large attendance when the Manchester City Art Gallery Exhibition was thrown open free for the fourth time. The total number registered by the turnstile (12,292) was the highest hitherto reached. The number of visitors between two and three o'clock was 1,994; three to four o'clock, 2,963; four to five o'clock, 2,387; five to six o'clock, 1,876; six to seven o'clock, 1,420; seven to eight o'clock, 1,652. On the first Sunday on which the exhibition was thrown open free, December 12, 7,614 persons were admitted; on the second, 10,322; on the third, 9,714; and on the fourth, 12,292, as stated above; the total for the four Sundays being 39,942. During the three Sunday free openings in 1885, the number of visitors was 30,663.

## GEMS.

ALL is but lip wisdom which wants experience.

If anyone says ill of you let your life be so that none will believe him.

THERE is no fountain so small but that heaven may be imaged in its bosom.

He is rich whose income is more than his expenses; and he is poor whose expenses exceed his income.

A MAN'S nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other.

IT is impossible that an ill-natured man can have a public spirit; for how should he love ten thousand men who never loved one?

TRUTH may be called an exact science, by the application of which all falsehood and imposition shall finally be detected and exiled from the earth.

IT sleep be thorough, a short spell will do more good than a much longer duration of sleep that is incomplete and imperfect both in its nature and in its effect.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BUTTERED EGGS WITH MUSHROOMS.—Put two ounces of butter into a stewpan; break four fresh eggs over it; add a good tablespoonful of chopped mushrooms, half a teaspoonful of salt and a quarter of a pepper. Stir this mixture over the fire till quite thick, when pour it on hot buttered toast, and serve at once.

SCALLOPED JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES.—Cut the artichokes into very small pieces, and stew them gently with a little anchovy sauce, pepper, and salt. When tender, lay the pieces in silver or earthenware shells, add a little of the sauce, cover with bread-crembs, a dust of pepper, and some tiny bits of butter, and brown either before the fire or with a salamander.

ITALIAN CAKE.—Half-pound of grated Parmesan cheese, quarter-pound of mutton suet, chopped fine, two ounces of macaroni (boiled till quite soft and cut into half-inch lengths), pepper and salt. Beat two eggs well and add them to the above; pour the mixture into a mould or basin, and steam for an hour and ten minutes, turn out, and serve with tomato sauce, or any rich good gravy.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

To shape the character of a child aright is a task which perhaps only those who have been wisely disciplined in youth are thoroughly competent to perform. Few know how to go about it; fewer still possess the requisite patience and equanimity to adhere persistently to the rules under which alone it can be accomplished. The great difficulty is with those strong propensities which, wholesome in themselves, and implanted in our nature for wise purposes, may become, if unregulated by principle, the source of the worst vices and the most heinous crimes.

TERMINATIONS OF WORDS.—Our writers are singularly inconsistent and confusing in the use of the terminations *ant* and *ent*. This is due to French influences, the French giving a certain preference to *ant* mainly in consequence of their pronunciation, in which *ant* and *ent* are not distinguished. In English *ant* and *ent* are distinguished, and in spelling the *ant* ought to follow the first conjugation in Latin, *ent* the second and third. *Latent*, *mendicant*, *potent*, *ignorant*, *pungent*, *ruminant*, *dependent*, *visitant*, *prudent*, *merchant*, *absorbent*, *inhabitant*, *student*, *vagrant*, *president*, *arrogant*, *opponent*, *elegant*, *absent*, *observant*, *resident*, and *expectant*, are all right. But *defendant*, *assistant* and *tenant* are wrong, *defendant*, *assistant* and *tenant* being justified by etymology. Worcester, who is very careful in such things and distinctly preferable to Webster, tries to discriminate between the nouns *confidant*, *descendant*, *dependant*, and the adjectives *confident*, *descendent* and *dependent*; but this differentiation is not justified in reason or fact. The French precedent is inconsistent and bad; usage is neither consistent nor specially good. For this reason one is justified in spelling *defendant*, especially as no careful speaker says *defendant*. At any rate, one need not respect the customary confusion in the endings *ant* and *ent*. A similar confusion reigns in the use of the endings *able* and *ible*. The point to get at in all such things is not a mere authority, but a good reason. If we demand a reason in religion, why not in spelling?

HOW PEARLS CAME IN FASHION.—On account of the general use of pearl beads, the old story is revived about the manufacture of them. In the time of Louis XIV. a rosary-maker was famous for the beauty of his pearl necklaces, and womankind from far and wide came seeking them. He was an honest man and dreading to sell them because of the quantity of mercury-poison used to give them their polish and wonderful whiteness. His son was frightened by hearing him say, when a string of beads was sold to a dear friend, "Infamous man that I am! May this crime be the last!" When war was declared between France and Flanders he grew joyful, because he thought no more necklaces would be ordered. The son he was so fond of was about to marry, and the father, delighted with his choice, said to the young girl, "Ask of me anything, for I am so glad to have so sweet a daughter!" With all innocence she said, "Oh, father! make for me one of those wonderful necklaces, such as only you can make!" The poor man fell back speechless and wondered what he should do. All that night he wandered through the woods, and when day came he threw himself on a bank beside the water to rest. There, floating on the top of the water, was an iridescent substance that attracted his attention—it looked like his own pearls. He searched for the cause, and found that the beautiful display was produced by the scales of a small white fish. He experimented with them, and after a while was able to produce the same effect he had produced by the use of poison. When the wedding-day arrived there was clasped about the throat of the bride the most beautiful string of pearls that had ever been seen, and without a particle of poison in them.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. T.—The lock of hair is of an exquisite light auburn hue, and most delicate texture.

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.—We do not insert matrimonial advertisements.

W. C. H.—Any good music-seller would procure the songs for you.

W. L.—The grammar is excellent in all respects, and your ideas are expressed in a very intelligent manner.

M. O.—Inquire at a local newspaper office, where the addresses sought after may be easily ascertained.

C. B.—Your penmanship is rather too effeminate for a young man, and the excessive flourishing indulged in mars its appearance to a great extent.

T. D.—Standard dictionaries usually contain a list of abbreviations in common use. There is no work devoted especially to the purpose.

W. W.—The abbreviation *sunt* somewhat resembles a law citation, although so poorly written that it is almost undecipherable.

C. S. I.—The Latin conjunction *nisi* signifies if not, unless; after interrogatives and negatives its meaning is except, save only, or only.

W. M.—When a decree of absolute divorce has been in existence three months the parties to the action are considered free.

X. Y.—Send your full name and address, and the stamp enclosed in your letter will be promptly returned.

A LOVER OF THE "READER."—We regret we cannot, in justice to other correspondents, teach the rudiments of music in this page.

RUBY NORTH.—1. Paint the warts every morning with nitric acid taking care not to touch the surrounding skin. 2. You write a good hand.

IDA AND LADYBIRD's hair is almost of the same shade, the latter being rather the darker of the two. They would be called dark seal-brown.

CORAL.—It is very difficult, unless there is a friend of both. You might try and find who the gentleman's friends are, and possibly get acquainted with some of them.

A. W. H.—The person named died from a complication of diseases, principally of the brain, but we have no reason to believe that an over-indulgence in liquor hastened his end.

MARY.—No charge is ever made for furnishing information in this column, but we cannot afford the time to answer queries by post unless they refer strictly to business matters.

VIOLET.—1. The medium height for a lady is 5 feet 2 inches. 2. The hair is very dark brown; blue eyes would certainly suit it. 3. Moles signify nothing more than pimoles. 4. Use prepared chalk for your teeth, and glycerine for your hands.

F. S. K.—Strong sage tea, applied with a sponge or cloth to the roots of the hair, has a tendency to strengthen them, and thus prevent any premature falling out. One application a day is sufficient; just previous to retiring for the night is the most appropriate time.

L. T. D.—The rubbing is of a piece of money issued by the East India Company, but it has no special value on the score of rarity. Even though possessed of that requisite to make it valuable, the fact of its being in such a poor state of preservation would preclude any possibility of its being classed as a premium-bearing coin.

B. G. S.—Were hair-dyeing compounds harmless in their action we would willingly publish the recipes whenever our readers expressed a desire to obtain such; but as the component parts of all preparations of the kind are highly poisonous, we do not feel justified in thus placing in the hands of inexperienced persons the means whereby they might do themselves an irreparable injury.

P. V. N.—The lady must be an incomparable vision of loveliness, judging from the minute description given of her charms. Still it should be borne in mind that a beautiful face and figure do make up the sum total of female beauty. When a woman, in addition to these, possesses a charming manner, a well-stored mind, and a loving heart, that prompts her to deeds of kindness and self-denial, the most confirmed old bachelor cannot resist her influence, and becomes so softened in manner and tone that even his most intimate friends have difficulty in recognizing him.

N. P. R.—A young lady may, if she wishes to attend a party, ball, or concert, or other place where an escort is required, and is provided with no suitable one, write to her affianced husband, or, if she is not yet engaged, to some friend of the other sex with whom she is on sufficiently intimate terms to venture to take such a liberty, and request him to accompany her. If any expense is to be incurred in thus attending her, she should purchase the admission cards and in close them in her note to him. The latter should be written in an easy, cordial manner, requesting him to do her the favour of escorting her to the place of amusement on a stated date, provided he has not already a prior engagement. Of course, in the case of an affianced couple the language used should not be as ceremonious as in other cases.

ELLA.—Knowing nothing of the constituent parts of the numerous so-called "hair restoratives," we do not feel justified in recommending any of them.

H. N.—The average height of youths aged nineteen is 5 feet 5 inches, and their weight ranges between 125 and 130 pounds.

D. H.—Many of the world's greatest heroes, philosophers, statesmen and the like were not distinguished in their boyhood days for brightness or aptitude for study.

S. B. R.—The book named can be procured from any bookseller or newsagent. It is said to be first-class in every respect; but we have no personal knowledge of the truth of these claims.

C. E. (Aberdeen).—You are morbidly hypercritical. We have carefully read the story, and can see nothing whatever in it to offend the most pure-minded. We thank you for your general appreciation of our efforts.

M. G. H.—There is no method of lengthening the eyelashes after one has passed the age of six or eight years. It is said that the clipping of the ends of a baby's lashes will produce the result you desire to attain.

MAMMA.—Parents and other relatives should not be too stern in reproving the thoughtlessness of young children, and even when compelled to do so should use words and not whips or black walnut rulers, as in the case related.

## WHEN THE YEAR IS NEW.

Hearts with sorrow shrouded,  
Homes with shadows crowded,  
Skies with darkness clouded,  
Hiding all the blue,  
Drop their veils of sadness,  
Emerging from th' mad  
To light and love and gladness,  
When the year is new.

Of the past repenting,  
Of their crimes relenting,  
Eagerly consenting  
Errors to undo;  
Souls once bent on sinning,  
Nobler heights are winning,  
Grand reforms beginning  
When the year is new.

Many wrongs are righted,  
Many troths are plighted,  
Loved ones reunited  
In a bondage true;  
Doubts that made us falter,  
And with conscience pester,  
Vanish from Love's altar  
When the year is new.

While the world is turning,  
While the lights are burning,  
And our hearts are yearning  
For the good and true,  
We may make advances,  
Spite of circumstances;  
And our only chance is  
When the year is new.

J. P.

N. P. S.—What are known as the He and She Bibles are those reprinted from the first two issues of our present Bible, in one of which the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of Ruth reads: "He went into the city; and the other, 'She went into the city.' The 'Wicked' Bible gets its name from the fact that the text of the Ten Commandments was set up with the word 'not' omitted where it should have been inserted, and inserted where it should have been left out.

E. S. W.—General U. S. Grant was born at Point Pleasant, Ohio, on April 27, 1822. He married in 1848 Miss Julia T. Dent, of St. Louis, sister of one of his class-mates. In his memoirs General Grant says, "My family is American, and has been for generations, in all its branches, direct and collateral." Matthew Grant, the founder of the branch in America, of which General Grant was a descendant, was a married man when he arrived in Dorchester, U.S., but his children were all born in that country.

N. R. R.—The foundation of the Russian Empire was laid at Novgorod, about 862 A.D., by the Rys, or Varangians, a body of Scandinavians led by Rurik, whose descendants, in spite of continual civil wars and Tartar invasions, occupied the throne for seven hundred years. In the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Russia was tributary to the Mongols, who ruled the nation in a most despotic manner. Ivan III., surnamed the Great, who reigned from 1462 to 1505, and Ivan IV., the Terrible (1538 to 1584), consolidated, extended and greatly strengthened the country. Peter the Great (1672-1725) was the most distinguished, and in many respects the ablest ruler Russia ever had. Alexander III., the present Czar, is the second son of Alexander II., and was born March 10, 1845. His mother was the Princess Maria, daughter of the late Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt. In 1866, in consequence of the death of his brother, the Grand Duke Nicholas, he married the daughter of the King of Denmark, the Princess Maria Darmar, to whom the deceased prince had been betrothed. His total income is said to be upwards of £2,000,000 a year.

D. H. W.—It is neither inconvenient nor troublesome for a child to answer its elders with a pleasant "yes," "no," "ma'am," "yes, sir," "no, ma'am," or "no, sir," and you have no reason for feeling aggrieved at your sister exacting that much politeness when addressing her.

DORA.—Boil a handful of figleaves, to be obtained from any herbalist, in two quarts of water till it is reduced to one pint, squeeze the leaves and bottle the liquor for use. When required sponge the alk with the preparation.

A. Y. Z.—To case-harden small articles of iron fuse together, in an iron vessel or a crucible, 1 part of prussiate of potash and 10 parts of common salt. Allow the articles to remain in this liquor for half-an-hour, then put them in cold water, and they will be in proper condition for the use required.

H. B.—Probably it arises from a disordered stomach. Live very temperately, take some alternative medicine, and every morning rinse the mouth with a teaspoonful of the concentrated solution of chloride of soda in a tumbler of water, and drink a wineglassful of water in which ten drops of it have been put.

R. L.—Having paid so much attention to both the ladies, it would be rather difficult to discriminate in sending one a present in preference to the other without giving offence to the slighted one. It would be polite, under the circumstances, to abstain from a presentation to either. 2. Your penmanship indicates a vacillating disposition.

H. S.—Stains in marble caused by oil may be removed by applying common clay saturated with benzine. If the grease has remained long enough it will have become acidulated, and may injure the polish, but the above mixture will remove the stain. The surface of the marble may be improved by rubbing or polishing afterwards with fine putty powder and olive oil.

H. G. S.—The cultivated variety of the cherry is recorded to have been brought from Cerasus (whence the name), a city of Pontus, in Asia Minor, and planted in the gardens of Italy by the Roman general, Lucullus, after he had vanquished Mithridates, in the year 69 B.C. From Italy it was introduced into England as early as 42 B.C., although some authorities place the date at 55 A.D.

Ella.—Let your girl go into the kitchen. Most girls, almost from babyhood, if permitted to be with their mothers in the kitchen, love to see the work done, particularly the cooking; and nothing delights them more than to be allowed to attempt to make some simple article themselves. This early play will not be forgotten. Girls that grow up under such training or indulgence will have no fear of the real care when it comes to them as a duty.

P. M.—On the 16th November, 1869, the Suez Canal was opened in form, with a procession of English and other foreign steamers, in the presence of the Khedive, the Empress of the French, the Emperor of Austria, and others. On November 27, the *Brazilius*—a ship of 1,800 tons, 380 feet long, 30 feet breadth of beam, and drawing from 17½ to 20½ feet of water—passed through. Since then the canal has continued in successful operation, and passages have been made almost daily, chiefly by British vessels. The cost of construction of this wonderful waterway is said to have reached, in 1869, between 11 and 12 millions. About 70 per cent. of the shipping and tonnage passing through belongs to Great Britain. The great advantage of the canal is, of course, the shortening of the distance between Europe and India.

W. W. S.—The indorsement O. K. on an account was originally used, it is presumed, by some one whose autograph was faulty to signify that it was "all correct"; but there are many explanations for the modern use of the letters. It is said that Old Keokuk, Chief of the Sac and Foxes, signed his name O. K., and that General Jackson when President, marked his state papers with the same significant letters. It is also stated that the letters were used by John Jacob Astor as initials of a supposed corrupting. Another explanation is this: "In the early Colonial days a brand of tobacco of peculiar excellence came from the then French town of Aux Cayes, in Santa Domingo. In course of time any good tobacco came to be known as Aux Cayes tobacco, and finally the word was corrupted into the two letters whose sound it resembles to denote anything of superior quality.

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